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AMER

ZTB  
Lackington







THE  
CONFESSIONS  
OF  
O. C.  
LACKINGTON,  
LATE BOOKSELLER,  
AT THE TEMPLE OF THE MUSES,  
IN A  
SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

---

then grew *Reason* dark, that *she* no more  
Could the fair forms of Good and Truth discern;  
As they became, who Eagles were before,  
And this they got by their *desire* to learn.

SIR J. DAVIS

the soul's dark cottage batter'd and decay'd  
In new light through chinks which time has made.

---

NEW-YORK:

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Editors & General Book Stewards, for the  
MODIST CONNECTION IN THE UNITED STATES.  
ROBINSON & LITTLE, PRINTERS,

Brooklyn.

1806.



ASHLER, IENOR AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

R

1919

L

# ADVERTISEMENT.

---

THE Author of this Confession is a man of a very prominent character. Having attained considerable celebrity, as well by his rapid rise from one of the lowest stations in life, to the possession of probably the greatest book-store in the known world; as by the many editions of his life, written principally to throw a general obloquy on Christianity, and to shew his particular aversion from the Methodists.

He followed the occupation of a cobbler, according to his confession; and, by hearing Methodist preachers, was convinced of his sinfulness, and made a good progress in experimental and practical piety. In consequence of his sobriety and diligence, accompanied with the generous assistance of his Methodist brethren, it appears he emerged from his debased situation, and by a swift promotion, rose to opulence. He now fell from his steadfastness in religion, and became, by degrees, an open deist and a vehement opposer of his former associates and patrons.

iment or his re-conversion. He has  
gned his business, and lives in ele  
d useful retirement, enjoying on  
privileges of that church from which  
and has lately (in 1804) published the  
rom which these are taken, desirou  
to efface the effects of his former erro  
blications. It has, for the same purpose  
ought expedient to re-publish them  
the present form, altering nothing i  
retained, but omitting what was deem  
closely connected with the subject, an  
his large quotations from the poets.—  
ord himself give it his blessing, and t  
all the glory,

---

## PREFACE.

---

SEVERAL of my friends have thought if the following Letters were made public they might prove useful as a warning to others not to fall into those errors which had already proved fatal to me; and, also, as an example to some of those who are already fallen into that dreadful state of infidelity from which, by the great mercy of God, I am happily escaped.

They were also of opinion, that as I had publicly ridiculed a very large and respectable number of Christians, and thus, in fact, made a wound at the very VITALS of Christianity, by this means giving occasion to speculative infidels and practical unbelievers to triumph and blaspheme; that, therefore, my repentance ought to be made as public as possible, and that by so doing I should give great satisfaction to many real Christians, who, with angels in heaven, will rejoice over a repenting sinner.

To the preceding reasons, the Author is obliged to add, that without publishing some-

angelical piety.

order that my readers might be clear ideas of the state of my  
gh the whole progress of my  
change, I thought it best to ins  
rs which I wrote while I was an  
thers written during my gradual  
of the truths which are revealed  
ures. And I request my readers  
, that the first 22 Letters w  
n before I was convinced of the t  
doctrines which are taught by t  
ts, and also by our Reformers,  
by the Liturgy, Articles, and H  
Church of England.

ne or two instances I have, for particular reasons, made use of a fictitious vehicle to place real facts, reasonings, reflections, &c.:

may be necessary to inform my readers, I am not (as some suppose), again become engaged in the bookselling trade. It is now years since I made over the whole of that business to Messrs. George Lackington, Almon & Co. since which time I have had no share or interest in it; and I am very sorry that my last summer published a new edition of my *Memoirs of my Life*; but I believed I had no intention to disoblige the Methodists, and merely published it as a matter of course to promote their trade. And although at that time was not pleased with its being published, yet I did not see the evil tendency which that work certainly has in so strong a degree as I have since.

I am, Readers,

Your very sincere well-wisher,

J. LACKINGTON.

London, Dec. 10th, 1803.



# LACKINGTON'S

## CONFESSIONS.

---

### LETTER I.

—————" Trembling I retreat ;  
prostrate soul again adores her God."

R,

IN my Memoirs I told you that I married Dorcas Turton. This girl had for some divided her spare hours between devotion and reading ; on Sundays she would attend sermons of two or three of those who are Calvinist-Methodist preachers, the intervals often filled up by reading of novels : and on her return from the Tabernacle in the evening the novel was resumed, and perhaps not quit-til she had seen the hero and heroine happily married, which often kept her out of bed un-til morning. On other evenings also she would hear a sermon at the Tabernacle, and devote the remainder of the night to reading " Tales and Maids forsaken."



my relish for more important subjects, not long before novels, romances, occupied a considerable part of our time. I even neglected my shop; for I was delighted with those fairy regions, and I could not bear the idea of business: I also solicited the preaching at the Foundery, and I hurried home, impatient until I had escaped into the realms of fiction. Some months passed in this manner. At last I was awakened from those dreams, and again I paid attention to my trade.

I observed in my Memoirs, that Mr. L. visited me during my long illness, when I was unable to be found in my shop. He would come, and, having little to do, and being in idleness, he would seat himself on the sofa, and, as occasion offered, attack me with his religious opinions.

pretend to understand them. He allowed that the authors of the Old and New Testaments, sometimes wrote as the Spirit dictated, but contended that they had written many things, without any such assistance; that, like other pious authors, they at times only wrote their own opinions; so that Mr. Denis only believed so much of the Bible as he approved of. The divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, &c. he did not believe. From Jane Leed, Madam Bourignon, Madam Guion, he had filled his head with *associating and centering with the divinity, which was the way to be all light, all eye, all spirit, all joy, all rest, all gladness, all love; pure love, rest in quietness, absorbed in silent spiritual pleasure, and inexpressible sweetness, &c.* Mr. D. did not attend any place of worship, except the Horse and Groom public-house, near Moorfields, could be called such. In Moorfields he sometimes would hear part of a sermon or two, and for an hour or two after the orations were ended, he was to be seen disputing among the mechanics, who very often came there for that purpose. In the afternoon on Sunday, he would go to the above public-house, where a room full of persons of this description usually met, and one or other of them would first read a chapter in the Bible, and afterwards animadvert on what he had read, and as many as were disposed to it, added their curious remarks. To this odd group of expositors, I was once introduced, but I did not repeat my visit.

From the disputes in my shop, example, &c. I soon came to think that the Sabbath-day was *more sacred than any other day*; so that inste-

...  
orship, he will not long be attentive to  
on ; it was at least the case with me  
began to entertain doubts concern  
ines of the Trinity, Atonement, &c.  
ortion as I relaxed in Christian duties  
fond of such disputes as had a ten  
e my mind easy on that score.  
out this time Mr. R. T—n—y adv  
ad the Memoirs of John Bunce,  
procured and read through. This p  
; (for such I now think it to be), at  
eradicated the remains of Method  
nearly the whole of Christianity.

Faults in the life, breed errors in the brain;  
And these, reciprocally, those again ;  
The mind and conduct, mutually imprint,  
And stamp their image on each other's mind.  
C

g become negligent of Christian duties, and  
relaxed in morals, it was not likely that I  
stop here.

ink it was in this year (1776) that I became  
inted with one whom I shall call Jack Jolly,  
me of his acquaintance, all downright infi-  
but otherwise shrewd, sensible men. Of  
I learned the names of such others as had  
on the side of infidelity ; and also the titles  
r pernicious productions.

ink it was the witty sarcasms and vile mis-  
entations of Voltaire that first made me en-  
give up my Bible, from which I had in past  
derived so much real comfort in the most  
sing circumstances of great poverty, and  
reat affliction. That precious book enabled  
breakfast, dine and sup on water gruel only,  
ely with a contented mind, but also with a  
il countenance and a merry heart. It was  
le which supported me under the several  
ffliction of a beloved wife, in which I truly  
d with her ; it was that book which enabled  
though young, to die with joy, and in full  
ertain hope of a glorious resurrection.  
this charming young woman died, I also  
ren over, my soul was, as it were, hovering  
lips just ready to depart. In this awful  
ny amiable wife gone! All around me ex-  
the moment when time to me should be no

his awful situation I remained a long time,  
g I know not, perhaps a week or weeks ;  
n in this state, although more dead than  
id the divine promises contained in the sa-

Caught are, Eternity at thee ;  
And dropp'd the world."

"ye infidels ! in your thoughtful mood  
would you deprive your poor fellow  
at which alone can support them amid  
licated miseries to which we are exposed  
withstanding I had, as I have observed  
been some time relaxing in religious  
nd duties, yet no tongue or pen can de  
I felt at times, on relinquishing the v  
contained the words of eternal life :  
renched from me. For I was so destitute  
ledge and abilities, as not to be able  
the witty and artful objections of that  
Voltaire, and others whose works soon  
I. I must confess that I felt it very hard  
from this old constant companion of mine  
should have been glad to have retained

## LETTER II.

————— Proud rationals,  
 That deep in speculation's wandering maze,  
 amuse themselves with error, and confound  
 the laws of men, of nature, and of heav'n,  
 resumptuous in their wisdom ———  
*Dr. Dodd's Thoughts in Prison.*

MY FRIEND,

HAVING quite done with the word of  
 I soon entirely neglected the public worship  
 ed. Before this, I went at times to one or  
 of Mr. Wesley's chapels, or to some parish  
 ch. But now I was taught to believe, that as  
 whole world was God's Temple, I could pay  
 evotions to him at any time and in any place;  
 onsequence you may easily imagine; the  
 Being was soon too much out of my  
 ights; the Sabbath-day was spent in reading  
 cious books, or in writing my catalogues, ar-  
 ng my books, casting up my profits, visiting,  
 And it was not long before I could make a  
 at cards on that day.

soon as I had gone through Voltaire's  
 s, I procured other works of the same ten-  
 , and in reading them I employed most of  
 are hours for several years. And although  
 not devote so much time to them after this,  
 read also history, voyages, travels, poetry,  
 s, &c. yet I often had recourse to them, and  
 every opportunity of purchasing new publi-  
 is which had the same pernicious tendency;

secured them, but read  
several times over, with a pencil  
marks to the most particular pas  
I also procured a Bible interleaved  
paper, and transcribed many of the  
objections of infidel writers to various  
opposite to some texts I even wrote  
reactions. Having had such a long  
with the authors in favour of freeth  
able to remark that Thomas Paine, a  
modern infidels, instead of consulting the  
copied the objections to it, from  
that preceded them, which objects  
ably answered, over and over again  
deep learning and great ability ; but  
like other freethinkers, neglected  
few years since. Now I have re  
sented of having been so e  
Christianity.

profession : he being of an open, honest disposition, incapable of practising any

About the years 1774 and 1775, he read a deal of polemical divinity, and by this lost that simplicity and gentleness of disposition so essential to the Christian character. He got acquainted with some, who having upon one point of Christian doctrine after another, in the end, become downright infidels. His acquaintance advised him to read the works of Chubb, Tyndal, Morgan, Collins, Shaftesbury, Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Hume, &c. Before he had read a quarter part of those books, he, and others, quitted his religious connexion. For a short time Dick boasted of being a real Christian, and talked much of Chubb as a very sensible, clear writer. After Dick had read Tyndal, Collins, Morgan, and Shaftesbury, he was then a Christian deist. Before Dick had gone through Voltaire's deistical pieces, he had repudiated Christ entirely, and was a philosophical deist, and pitied the poor ignorant Christians for obliging themselves to be kept in the dark. But he had not quite finished Bolingbroke's philosophical works before he was, from a dignified philosopher, sunk down to a reasoning brute. He left his immortal, immaterial part in the labyrinths of metaphysics. Voltaire's Ignorant philosopher made Dick a Sceptic ; Helvetius and Hume gave the finishing stroke to the picture ; Dick was then an atheist !



acting doubt and uncertainty ; at on  
t, then doubting of every thing, eve  
existence. Now, there must be tw  
stances, matter and spirit, and then t  
ut one, which must be matter. So  
s quite sure that there is one self-exi  
and that he has an immaterial soul  
; then again he is perplexed and d  
doubts.

Whenever I read the following lines,  
me much, being applicable to my  
y others, as well as to Dick.

Poor wretch ! he read, and read, and read  
Till his brain turned-----  
He had unlawful thoughts of many thing  
He never lov'd to pray  
With holy men, nor in a holy place---  
-----It is a perilous tale !

## LETTER III.

But when no female arts his mind could move,  
She turn'd to furious hate her impious love.

DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

———Hallow'd is the nuptial bed,  
Of deeper sanctity than oaths, and guarded  
By justice.

POTTER'S AESCHYLES.

EAR FRIEND,

HAVING informed you in the last of the ordinary revolutions that took place in Dick's ments, you will not be much surprised when I inform you that a great alteration also took place in his life and conduct.

I knew Dick before he made any profession of religion, and thought him an honest well-meaning, a facetious, sprightly companion; his temper generally good upon the whole; if affronted, passionate, but easily pacified, being incapable of bearing any malice to any one. He was grateful for any kindness or kindness towards him; open and unsuspicious, and friendly. I believe I may add that he was capable of the highest degree of friendship. A sociable turn of mind at times drew him into dissipated parties.

Before he turned Methodist and married, he was devoted to the pleasures of lawless love; but he treated the sex in the kindest manner. After he became a Methodist he lived a strict religious life, and, as I think, as I before observed, perfectly

... religion had made a radical change  
in heart and life.

Reading much religious controversy,  
and about doctrines, has hurt many.

They dispute so much and long about it,  
That even themselves begin to doubt it.

When Dick's mind was puzzled he was  
not, nor so universally attentive to pres-  
byterian temper and manners as he had been  
but when he ventured on the writings of  
writers, he was the more easily seduced by  
the truth and simplicity of the gospel. For so  
far Dick had become, in his own concei-  
ption; he talked of the eternal rule of  
the fitness of things, of loving virtue for  
own sake, and a great deal to the same  
effect. Indeed at times he had been

acts of distress ; but he would sometimes spend a major part of the night with free-thinking companions at a tavern. Two or three years after he commenced moral philosopher, he was not able to resist the charms of his servant maid, although he was possessed of an amiable wife, with whom, to all appearance, he lived very happy, and who both loved and esteemed her husband.

——“ Lust tho’ to a radiant angel link’d,  
Will satiate itself in a celestial bed,  
And prey on garbage.”

“ But the use never will be moved,  
Tho’ lewdness court it in the shape of heaven.”

In novels we often read of men’s planning deep and taking incredible pains in order to seduce women : in real life even the most profligate part of the sex do not commonly attack a fort that appears to be impregnable, nor are they fond of going on without hope. Such married women who at all times behave themselves as the delicacy of the female character requires, have seldom complaints of this nature to make. Cato would not have been suspected ; no doubt but he had the same as just hinted at. The late pious Bishop Wilkes says, in his 55th sermon, “ Let but women so behave themselves, as that the men may think them *chaste* ; and they may be confident, nobody will attempt them *but in an honest way*.” He adds, “ But this is the *real* occasion of so many miscarriages :—people discover, either by their very vain dress, or looks, or words, or behaviour,

the ties of friendship ; yet I have seen  
that some of his infidel companions  
have scrupled, for a moment's grati-  
fication, have sacrificed the peace and happiness  
of their best friends.

I have been more particular in describ-  
ing Dick's infidelity and vice, as in so  
many, in some particulars, described my  
self, than that of others.

I am, dear friend,  
Yours

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

#### LETTER IV.

It seem'd as though his conscience would  
A momentary pause, for one short gleam  
Of hope to visit his benighted soul.

religion. It was sent to Jack Jolly, in 1799.

Dear Jack,

I am uncertain whether you are dead or alive, in the world or in a better ; in a worse you cannot tell. I would meet with Mercury when I have finished this, I would transcribe a copy of it and send it by him, directed to Jack Jolly, the philosopher in the Elysian Fields—inquire among the gods of Bacchus.

As far as it regards yourself only, I do not care of much consequence whether you are eternally oppressed, and overwhelmed with sorrow and pain, or making merry with your joyous companions over a bottle : now moralizing and railing on moral and physical evil ; then finding fault with administration ; one while believing in the first cause, and then asserting that the Devil has existed from all eternity. In short, you are still going on in the old dull round of pleasure and much pain ; or, whether you have quitted this insignificant motley scene, in the chance of losing the happiness and misery of this existence, or of existing in a happier state of being. But while I live in hopes of the pleasure I may receive from you, (although but seldom) and of seeing you by my fireside, I must confess, I am so selfish as to wish you may not have the least start of me. I have sent you two letters, I have received one from you. If you really are mortal, of mortality, and should read this, do so as to read it, and let me know how your excellent

... Emerson, several  
philosophers have repeated it after him, &  
I have believed it; but now I have my  
doubts about it. On the other hand, I know not  
how to prove that ignorance and error can promulgate  
truth; I really am much perplexed. On the  
other hand, it is certain, the breaking down of the  
artificial dykes has brought on us an un-  
precedented flood of vice and immorality, the effects of  
which our own age is alarming in the highest de-  
gree. I have observed, that for a year or two  
past a great change has taken place in me towards  
many of our great authors; I have seldom any thing  
to say for them. Those late great favourites and  
companions of mine are now neglected  
and covered with dust; for at times I can scarcely  
bring them chargeable with some of the  
vices that are now inundating Europe.

" I am now grown more indifferent than ever as to what others do, how they live, &c. or even as to what they think of me, or my way of life. I know that I am thought to be a strange sort of a fellow, but I neither hunt, shoot, drink, nor play at cards. I read until I am tired. I then walk or work in my garden, and in bad weather I cleave wood, &c. Once a week I dine with Mrs. L.'s father, who, although a lawyer, is a very honest, peaceable gentleman. He is also good to his poor neighbours, and goes to church once a week, except I happen to be there on Sunday when the service is in the afternoon, when I keep him awake by relating all the droll adventures that I can recollect. In my turn I patiently listen to his old stories, although I have heard them twenty times before ; long may he live in his peaceable and quiet mansion.

I am,

Dear Jack,

Your old friend,

*Wreston, March 10th, 1799.*

J. L."

I have since learned that Jack Jolly's brother died about this time, and that Jack survived him only about a year, but his health was so impaired as to render him unable to write. What were his dying sentiments I have endeavoured to learn, but without success ; I fear they were not what I now could wish them to be, as I wrote to an old infidel relation of his to know what state his mind was in when dying, but I never received any answer. As you will have more particulars relating to Jack, I will now add no more, but that,

I am, dear friend, your's.



OLD FRIEND,

I REMEMBER to have read twice, I believe in a translation of one of the works, of a man that was suspected of having murdered his father ; but as no positive evidence was advanced against him, it was thought proper to acquit him. In order to be more satisfactorily acquitted, a person unknown to him, was ordered to keep close attention to him every time he appeared in public, which was accordingly done ; and on his reporting that the suspected man was perfectly sound, it was concluded that he could not have murdered his father.

This was led to the recollection of the above mentioned some part of my last letter to you, and I was surprised it possibly might give you occasion for it. I was by a train of reasoning brought to the same conclusion.

and others mentioned in my last, I, with hostile, "*trust* that he hath a good consci-

my dear friend, if because I could wish to a perfect good humour, like the emperor stus, you think me a mere trifler, and any to serious thoughts, you never were more sen, as no man can think more gravely on s subjects than I do at times, and that freely ; but then I insist on it, that, a time of ss, when the body is overwhelmed with pain sorders, is not a suitable time for repent-

much less should that important work be ed to a death-bed. Nothing surprises me than to hear or read of rational beings, or who would be thought such, talk of making peace with Heaven on their death-bed.

the greatest offenders against the laws of soci- a general shew great contrition when brought gallows ; yet no one is so ignorant as to be- that their repentance is of that kind as, were ives spared, would prevent them from com- g other daring offences. How then can we ne that the heart of a villain who has the good o escape the gallows, can be totally changed death-bed.

ish from my soul that our dramatic and novel s had not given so many deep wounds to ity as, from observation, I have great reason k they have done by their frequent insinua- of the efficacy of a few days, sometimes a ours repentance or remorse. Surely, in all roductions, every villain and immoral cha-

concise manner ; and to Christians it may be  
useful :

Full headlong from the roof the sleeper fell  
And snapp'd his spinal joint and wak'd in  
POPE'S O

I have often been puzzled to find those  
wise authors of plays and novels, (some  
are very respectable, and deserve the  
esteem of the community,) learned their notions of  
religion. They did not learn them from  
the Bible, for in them repentance is made to  
signify an entire change of heart and life. No  
other doctrine teaches the same doctrine. By the  
learned we find that the wisdom of  
the ancients, the sacred books of the ancient Bra-  
mins, the sacred books of the ancient Bra-  
mins of Confucius, all hold forth the same  
doctrine in respect to repentance. The

dispositions with them into the other world ; or in other words, that every man carries the seeds of eternal happiness or misery in his own mind : so that if we go into the other world with evil passions unmortified, they will not only be far more violent than now, but our perception of them will be pure and unalloyed by any intermixture of enjoyment.

Dr. Scott, in the three first chapters of his *Christian Life*, has pursued the Platonic doctrine through all its consequences. It is well worth the attention even of a philosopher. Mr. Boyd has given us an excellent summary view of the Platonic doctrine with respect to a future state, at the end of his translation of Dante's *Inferno* : I will give you a few short extracts.

"The souls of men, whenever they leave the body, doubtless associate with spirits like themselves."

"We cannot see how spirits act upon each other, yet there is no doubt but the plagues inflicted by spirits upon spirits are as immediate as those inflicted by body upon body."

"What woeful society must that be ! where all trust and confidence is banished, and every one stands upon his guard, tortured with eternal vigilance of surrounding mischiefs ! when all his employment is diabolical fraud. There society is like the monster Scylla, whom the poets speak of, whose inferior parts were a company of dogs continually snarling and quarrelling among themselves, and yet inseparable from each other, as being parts of the same substance."

exercise of virtue delightful, we sit  
selves under the central force of heaven  
rawn along by the powerful magnetism  
and pleasure."

From every point of view, I think it is  
repentance does not consist in a mor  
row, but in a change of disposition and  
must confess that I cannot help thinkin  
en would be a strange sort of a place i  
al, knave, and fool were permitted to g  
have, on their death-bed, experien  
se of conscience. Such wretches a  
made a hell of this world to all co  
them ; and are they to make a hell of  
' Can one conceive a worse hell than i  
r a perfectly honest man to live eterna  
que, or a virtuous woman with an old b  
e laugh when we read of the Indian

or the greatest crimes, on the easy terms of what we call repentance ; which, after all, may be facinorous, or at best imperfect ?

I am,

Dear Friend,  
Your's.

## LETTER VI.

O ye fallen !

Fallen from the wings of *reason* and of *hope* !

Erect in stature, prone in appetite !

Patrons of pleasure, posting into pain !

Lovers of argument, averse to sense !

Boasters of liberty, fast-bound in chains !

—Fall he *must* who learns from death alone

The dreadful secret,—That he *lives* for ever.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

DEAR FRIEND,

FOR a year or more after I wrote the last of the two preceding letters, I continued in a state of perplexity which increased upon me. At last I procured some books in defence of divine revelation, and soon after some authors on practical divinity ; but it was with difficulty that I prevailed on myself to avow the alteration that had by that time taken place in my sentiments. I however, at last, wrote the following letter to B.

“ Old Acquaintance,  
I have no right, nor any inclination to upbraid you ; your past conduct, on reflection, must make

On this occasion very gloomy ideas took possession of my mind ; so painful were they that I could not call upon you. I believe people feel more than I do on seeing an old man reduced by his own misconduct to wretched poverty ; yet painful as those were, I had still more distressing thoughts of a very sad case. I, in imagination, saw you lying on a wretched bed, groaning under the pains of disease, a ruined constitution, premature old age ; and, what is still a hundred times worse, I pictured your features wasted, and your countenance made ghastly by excruciating tortures you suffered in your mind. Your spirit, or fortitude, may support you through the infirmities of the body, as sick and in pain ; *but a wounded spirit who can bear* I did not finish my melancholy picture. We could do still more to comfort you.

The whirls of passion, and the strokes of heart.  
 A deity believ'd is joy begun ;  
 A deity ador'd is joy advanc'd ;  
 A deity belov'd is joy matur'd.  
 Each branch of piety delight inspires ;  
 Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,  
 O'er death's dark gulph, and all its horrors hides ;  
 Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,  
 That joy exalts and makes it sweeter still ;  
 Pray'r ardent opens heaven, and lets down a stream  
 Of glory on the consecrated hour  
 Of man in Audience with the Deity.  
 Who worships the great God that instant joins,  
 Joins the first in heav'n, and sets his foot on hell.

YOUNG.

The reason of my troubling you with my gloomy  
 thoughts on your present situation and state of  
 mind is this : I remember between twenty and  
 thirty years since, you was made acquainted with  
 my sceptical state of mind ; and although I never  
 approved of your rudely obtruding your opinions  
 in company, or your endeavouring to turn others  
 out of the good old way ; yet, as perhaps by my  
 example or remarks, or by lending you books you  
 may have been more or less confirmed in antichris-  
 tian opinions. I could not rest satisfied until I  
 had informed you that my mind has undergone a  
 very great change ; that I have a thousand times  
 heartily repented, that the pernicious writings of  
 witty infidels should ever have made me even  
 doubt of the truth of the heart-improving, soul-  
 cheering doctrines of Christianity.

I must also inform you that I have seen the  
 dreadful effects of infidelity on others. Some of  
 my most intimate acquaintance, before they were  
 infected with infidelity were examples of piety and



their sad way of life, -  
disorders under which they sunk  
before they were summoned to gi  
counts. There, profane wit and  
more.

Although I have an aversion to  
enthusiasm, yet I would much rat  
to the poor ignorant enthusiastic  
whom you must well remember, t  
shrewd and witty remarks of my  
acquaintance, who used to set th  
These clever, sensible, witty fello  
subtile reasoning, had not unde  
to live like rational beings, but  
practices brought on themselves  
misery, and shortened their exi  
old David Burford's fear of God  
early and righteously ; his fair  
poverty and a

have been, although we used to laugh at and  
pise him. May we begin to live the life, that  
ast we may die the death of this poor simple  
aver !

Among all your freethinking acquaintance did  
t ever know one whose reading, learning, or  
enabled him to live so uprightly and comfort-  
y in so much poverty and affliction ; or who  
ld, like him, look death steadily in the face with  
nble joy. Young says truly.

“ A Christian is the highest stile of man.”

The most learned, the wisest, and best of men  
e Christians. In reading history and biogra-  
we learn, that many of the most intelligent  
n, after many years spent in voluminous libra-  
in eager search of science, of knowledge, and  
dom, have, in the end, thrown aside even the  
st respectable works of ancient and modern  
osophers, moralists, historians, politicians, po-  
&c. and have in their partly-neglected Bible  
nd a treasure which every where else they had  
ght for in vain. The brightest geniusses have  
nd ample satisfaction in that book. There is  
sublime and the beautiful ; the most pathetic  
ies, and elegant parables ; the grandest de-  
ptions and the most august ideas of the Deity ;  
most perfect morality ; the greatest motives  
rtue, and the most awful denunciations against  
. In a word, in that book we are taught the  
of holy living ; and by so living we ensure to

To this letter I did not receive any a  
June the same year. It is time to con

I am,

Dear Frien

---

## LETTER VII.

When late there is less time to play the  
Soon our whole *term* for wisdom is expi  
(Thou know'st she calls no council in th  
And everlasting fool is writ in *fire*,  
Or *real* wisdom wafts us to the skies.

EAR FRIEND,

BY J. B.'s letter to me

*delusions still to believe a lie, for not obeying the gospel of Christ.* I am also happy to learn that you have a better conviction than that which only brings with it a *fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which is ready to be poured forth on the adversaries of Christ.* May God, who is so rich in mercy, *establish both you and me in the truth as it is in Christ, and in every good word and work,* that we may not be in the number of those that *draw back unto perdition,* but of those that believe to the saving of the soul.

The life of Christ may well fill you with admiration and devotion. I was, even when an infidel, struck dumb and confounded whenever, for a few moments, I seriously reflected on his wonderful character. We have not only been wicked, but also astonishingly stupid in professing to disbelieve miracles, when at the same time we were obliged to believe the greatest of miracles: That the son of a poor obscure carpenter, brought up in a very ignorant, scandalous village, could *speak as never man spake,* and live among the dregs of mankind like a God!

—————In his blessed life,  
We see the path, and in his death the price,  
And in his great ascent, the proof supreme  
Of immortality. —————

DR. YOUNG.

You say that you have but one book of your own, which is the New-Testament. In possessing that you have the best book in the world; a book which angels could not have composed; a book, which the primitive Christians esteemed more than their lives; rather than suffer one of

y.

“ And found no end in wondering mazes

But in those sacred pages life and in  
brought to light ; a glorious prospec  
l to us beyond the grave, where clouds  
ss are no more.

I am glad you have friends who will  
enty of books. Yes, he must be stupi  
hom even a little knowledge in astron  
t fill with devotion.

But even among the stars do not forget y  
estament; that, by the blessing of God, i  
ou wise unto salvation : and should tha  
c case with you, perhaps you may be  
all eternity in contemplating infinite w  
odness among those stupendous wor  
reat *incomprehensible* CREATOR of th  
erable worlds.

allowing, they will help to establish you in the  
of the truth of Divine Revelation :—Paley's  
nces of Christianity ; Bishop Watson's A-  
y for the Bible, in Letters to Thomas Paine ;  
p Porteus' Compendium of the Evidences of  
tianity ; Addison's Evidences of the Chris-  
Religion ; Madame Genlis' Religion the only  
of Happiness and true Philosophy, in which  
'principles of the modern pretended Philoso-  
are laid open and refuted, 2 vols. Butler's  
e Analogy ; Bentley against Collins ; Bent-  
Sermons on the folly of Atheism ; Jenkin's  
nableness and Certainty of the Christian re-  
, 2 vols. I have lately read the whole of  
works with great satisfaction. If you are  
of real philosophy and astronomy, you will be  
y pleased with Bentley's Sermons on the fol-  
Atheism. Paley's is an extraordinary good

Butler's Analogy is a very great work.  
n's is the most copious and the best work I  
read in defence of divine revelation. It treats  
lear manner of the necessity of a divine reve-  
, antiquity of the scriptures, God's dispensa-  
under the Patriarchs, Moses, Judges, Kings,  
hrist ; the wisdom and goodness of God is  
ently displayed in the manner of the pro-  
ation and preservation of the scriptures ; va-  
difficulties are cleared and objections an-  
d. The author has, through the whole, dis-  
ed great depth of thought, a thorough know-  
of the history of the four great monarchies  
oned in the Old Testament, and of other an-  
nations ; which he has brought forward in  
mation of the truth of divine revelation. In

been acquainted with it, we never should  
 been so seduced, perverted and imposed  
 hallow pretenders to sense and learning  
 still a bookseller, I would immediately  
 very large impression, sell them cheap  
 perse them through every part of the work  
 work has gone through various editions  
 been greatly enlarged and improved since  
 first published. Before I conclude, I  
 ously advise you not to read any contro  
 points of doctrine or articles of faith; v  
 solutely necessary to be known is plain

“ Not *deeply* to *discern*, or much to *know*,  
 “ Mankind were born to *wonder* and

The more you read the New-Test  
 more you will enter into and partake o  
 of it; and your love for it will increase  
 tion. Read also as much practical divi  
 “ and in need of your aid

In all the magnanimity of thought  
 Resolves ; and re-resolves ; then dies the same.  
 NIGHT THOUGHTS.

Neither you nor I considered that we were very great fools until we were more than fifty. The last line has been verified in thousands. God grant that it may not prove true of us also.

I am,  
 Old Acquaintance,  
 Your's,

*Alveston, July 28, 1803.*

J. L.'

You see, dear friend, the melancholy effects of infidelity even in this life ; to what poverty, shame and disgrace have thousands of its votaries been reduced. The conversion of this poor creature should also encourage us to use what abilities we may possess, however small they may be, in order to reclaim others. We should put proper books into their hands, and never be tired or discouraged. Small causes have often produced great effects. I have been just reading of an atheist who was converted by one word. The story is related by Madame de Genlis in her " Religion considered as the only basis of Happiness and of true Philosophy," vol. i. p. 76. I will transcribe the passage :

She says, " Others after having doubted all  
 " their lives, change in a moment their sentiments  
 " and dispositions. I knew a man of great sense  
 " and very high character, whose conversion was  
 " brought about by a single word. He was yet in  
 " the age of the passions ; he had never possessed



... to have heard  
" at least ; and after having given him  
" his sentiments and opinions, he iron  
" ed, that, according to every appea  
" should never be converted. Ah, exch  
" ecclesiastic, who, till then, had been  
" you could but hope !—He said no mo  
" up and went out. But these words ma  
impression upon the heart of the at  
had no difficulty to comprehend their  
meaning ; he felt himself moved and  
a croud of new reflections presented th  
to his mind ; he longed to see and  
again with the man who had produce  
so strange a revolution. The next day  
went in search of him ; he opened to  
heart, asked his advice, hearkened to l  
attention, with eagerness ; and from tha  
renounced for ever the vain conch  
...

## LETTER VIII.

v'd associates of unclouded hours,  
 m I remember still, where are ye now ?  
 whither tost by life's unfriendly waves !  
 aps on earth we never more may meet.

COURTIER.

FRIEND,

THE two preceding letters were address-  
 r. D. and by him conveyed to J. B. in the  
 ise in T——n. When I was an appren-  
 r. D. came to work in the same shop as a  
 nan, and two or three years after the  
 my master he married my mistress, to  
 e made an excellent husband ; he buried  
 or three years since. While he was a  
 man, I advised him to go and hear the  
 ist preachers ; he did so ; and for more  
 rty years has been an upright, friendly  
 s man.

ir. D. is a very old acquaintance of mine,  
 of J. B. I requested him to read my first  
 J. B. as he was ill. The reading of it  
 n much pleasure, as he found that I had  
 mbraced that religion which I had so long  
 ved ; and he wrote a letter to congratulate  
 the occasion. I will give you my answer  
 J.'s letter.

SIR,

a perhaps may have remarked, that when-  
 visit T——n, I also always visit the fields by  
 : of the river, and other places where, in

“ On this side and on that we see our fr  
Drop off like leaves in autumn.”

Others of them have lost every pious sentiment : so that I cannot visit delightful haunts without finding that recollections are tinged with melanc

————— Gracious God !

How wonderful a compound, mixture s  
Incongruous, inconsistent, is frail man.

Σ

As every field where I used to cor  
my old acquaintance affords me delig  
you will believe me when I assure you  
great pleasure in seeing or even hearing  
one of them who have preserved a g  
ence. I was the more pleased with  
dated Jan. 17, 1803, as from it I le  
had long since forgot,) that it was at

temptation of the devil and a sinful world, and  
 e, as an earnest of heaven, attained that peace  
 mind which worlds cannot purchase, and no-  
 ing but a relapse into sin can destroy ; if through  
 m you attained that well-grounded hope which  
 kept you steady in all the storms of this tem-  
 tuous state of things, where, at times, you can  
 end your prospect to future scenes where all is  
 n and sunshine, I do not wonder that you  
 uld wish to live and die in their connection. I  
 e I shall ever love and honour such of your  
 munity as by their lives and examples shew  
 : they are Christians indeed.

Have you not remarked that those who have re-  
 ned the most steady, have in general been  
 has were most free from enthusiasm and fana-  
 sm ? I wish those who think that they now  
 d firm may take heed lest they fall. Shall I  
 you that most of the free-thinkers of my ac-  
 intance were once professors of religion, who  
 contracted a habit for disputation. It has  
 n happened that men have disputed so long  
 at points of doctrine, that they have forgot the  
 cipal part of religion. We read of some of  
 who held the truth in unrighteousness, who  
 considered as in the direct road to delusion,  
 likely soon to believe in lies. Indeed it ap-  
 s to me, that it is of little consequence what a  
 believes, if he neglects his duty towards God  
 man.

I think the following passage, which gave  
 rsrs. Hili and Co. so much offence, and was the  
 occasion of the controversy between them and

*trust in what was done in one moment ?  
: are every hour and moment pleasing or  
g to God according to our works, accordi  
ward tempers and outward behaviour."*

But to return, as I had no intention to  
this rate. I meant to observe, that :  
ing according to the mild precepts of th  
the only way of living happily in this  
t, we are such poor purblind mortals as  
extinguish the sun and walk by a tap  
it grow tired of the necessary restraint  
: religion of Christ enforces, and think  
us precepts hard sayings : in this state  
ing already lost part of the disposit  
per of Christianity, we grow more re  
olic worship and private devotion, in ot  
sabbath, &c. then conscience upbra  
kes us unhappy ; and if in this state

presented as not attending to the frailties and  
 of mortals ; or perhaps he finds virtue and  
 represented as qualities capable of arbitrary  
 tions, revealed religion as mere priestcraft,  
 &c. In such authors, specious arguments are  
 sed, often good reasoning from wrong propo-  
 s, and truth and falsehood are so artfully  
 ed together. that in the end he is prevailed  
 to give up his Christianity, and by degrees  
 conscience is quite laid asleep.  
 my next I will give you a further account of  
 progress in infidelity.

I am,  
 Sir, your's, &c.

J. L.<sup>th</sup>

oston, Feb. 8, 1803.

## LETTER IX.

n hellish banquets, and obscene delights,  
 The curst assembly here consume the nights.

E. ROWE.

———— But if there's an hereafter ;  
 And that there is conscience tells ev'ry man ;  
 When must it be an awful thing to die.

BLAIR.

MY FRIEND,

I WILL now transcribe my second letter  
 : D. I know not well how to make it shorter.

, moral principles, &c. But having given  
tianity, he soon grows tired of his re  
quaintance, as he does not like their  
and serious arguments to convince him  
ror. Having got rid of his pious acquai  
looks out for some of those who, like hi  
become philosophers. With those he  
akes "a philosophical walk," or "cu  
As their acquaintance increases, they di  
ther's house. When this young free  
hought to be pretty well confirmed in hi  
Christianity, he is invited to dine or s  
arty of those philosophers at a tavern.  
r three first times he goes home earl  
ood order. In those convivial parties  
many stories against parsons, and many  
pon religion, under the name of sup  
that, by degrees, he becomes more  
s love for those meetings.

ning, where they are sometimes picked  
e prostitutes, and enticed into brothels,  
ence they carry home to their wives those  
ie diseases which often contaminate the  
several generations, and for which their  
ldren will perhaps execrate their me-

manner many soon learn to spend most  
nights ; their days are mostly consum-  
leep ; their business is lost ; their for-  
n out, and their constitution totally ruin-  
ne of them are carried off by sudden  
others linger out a few years in great mi-  
then die in a horrid state of doubt and  
pprehension. And not a few of those  
ers have, by their principles and conduct  
themselves into such an unhappy state of  
not to be able to endure existence, but

t reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage,  
sh'd into the presence of their judge ;  
if they challeng'd him to do his worst."

gh those imaginary philosophers see  
panions drop off one after another, they  
from taking warning that they do all they  
rden one another, by urging every argu-  
y can think of against the immortality of  
a future state, and even against the very  
a God !

l fill volumes, were I to be particular, in  
g the beginning and progress of infidelity  
iose whom I have known since I first com-  
bookseller, as many of them came often to



consolation to see that several of our  
other sensible, learned clergymen ; an  
able dissenting ministers, have publish  
confutations of the works of infidels.  
have also taken other wise and pious  
stop, as much as possible, the progres  
ty ; and every man that has any reg  
gion or morality, should put a hand  
work. Those who can afford to do it  
chase such tracts against infidel prin  
published at a low price, and disper  
much as possible wherever they are  
good. That cheap editions of all su  
are favourable to Christianity are no  
with is much to be regretted. Seve  
works might be decently printed, and  
ded, for one quarter their present p  
owing to their extravagant dearness th  
sold. Had they been published at low  
of thousands more would have been di

cheap tracts on practical divinity, together with bibles, and testaments. I have remarked, many persons who would not be at the expense of purchasing books, will either buy themselves or make their children read to them books are put into their hands.

It is natural to add, that those who can do nothing for the cause of God, should shew, by good examples, the influence of religion upon their life and conversation: this has often produced effects upon scoffers. On the other hand, infidels see that such as call themselves Christians can neglect the public worship of God, the sabbath, be covetous or prodigal, proud and bearing, or mean and undermining, drunk-gluttons, defrauders and cheats, backbiters and slanderers, swearers, liars, &c. they are ready to conclude that such persons do not believe in a future judgment, when every one shall be dealt with according to the deeds done in the body.

The late pious Bishop Horne, in one of his sermons, "some men considered as Christians, but in the concerns of a better world, and a more perfect conduct, is really sufficient to make a true unbeliever conclude, that nine parts in ten of them either believe no more than himself, or that a great part of lunacy should be forthwith taken from them."

Now that freethinkers will divert and harden their hearts with accounts of the bad practices of those who pretend to believe in Christ: so that such persons themselves Christians, and at the same time in open breach of God's laws, are strength-

*Delmon, Dec. 10, 1803.*

I will defer the remainder of what I  
r. D. until my next.

I am,

Dear Friend,

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

## LETTER X.

Wildly-wavering, rolls the dubious mind  
From thought to thought, uncertain where  
Should end —

— — — — —  
Convinc'd by truth, the enlightened mind  
Suspends its full assent.—

OGILVIE'S PROVID

As I have not even loved the sight of that private library where the books standuced me from the simplicity of the gospel have been to me *Will o' the Wisp*; I followed them through bog and quagmires and thorns, until my poor benighted clouded mind was lost in such a labyrinth; it is next to impossible for me ever to find out. As I suppose you will be glad to see so great a deliverance was effected, I give you a short account of it.

Understanding the bad lives of some infidels of instance, as I continued to retain a regard to honour and honesty, myself; and as a hypocrites are studious, and, to appearance, virtuous, professing to believe in natural religion, on the other hand, I have remarked that some were guilty of gross enormities, who professed to believe the bible to be the word of God; for a long time, thought that infidels were not to be governed by virtuous principles as hypocrites were; the vicious lives of some pretending to christianity in some measure tended to confirm this erroneous conclusion. I was still confirmed in this opinion by the plausible reasoning in some infidel writers, who, as you know, say much about moral rectitude, the eternal right, moral obligation, moral sense, &c. Lord Shaftesbury goes very far on this point; he asserts that vice as much disorders the mind as disease does the body; which, no doubt, is true. He is also right in asserting, that virtue is beauty, and vice moral deformity.

and that persons influenced by such an  
endeavouring to overreach the Deity,  
sing eternal happiness with a short life.  
He insinuates that the old saints, who  
to the recompence of reward, were cu-  
ple, and only good from the fear of the  
hope of heaven. How much is this the  
devil's objection? Job does not serve God  
In another place his Lordship asserts that  
no more rectitude, piety, or sanctity in  
thus reformed, than there is meekness  
tleness in a tyger strongly chained, or  
and sobriety in a monkey under the  
the whip.

If the rewards proposed to Christian  
like those promised by Mahomet to his  
sensual and voluptuous; his Lordship  
had some reason to object to them.

assembly of holy and happy souls, and most excellent part of God's creation, in which they shall cultivate an eternal friendship and harmony ; and, which is chiefly to be enjoyed, when they shall be admitted to the immediate presence of the Deity, and shall be raised as far as they are capable of it, into the likeness of God. Such is the happiness that is set before us, and which furnisheth a motive fitted to work upon the worthiest minds.

being animated with the hopes of such a reward, and bath nothing mean or mercenary in it, there is an argument of a great and noble

the fear of punishment, his Lordship, consistently with what he in other places (vol. ii. page 273 of his *Characteristics*,) although fear allowed to be ever so low "yet, *religion* being a *discipline*, and a motive of the soul towards perfection, the motive of reward and punishment is primary, the highest motive with us ; till being furnished with more sublime instructions, we are let pass from this servile state, to the glorious service of God, and love "

he also remarked, that after a wicked man roused by the terrors of the Lord, if he obeys the good motions of the Spirit, *God gives him a clean heart, and renews a righteousness within him.* He then begins to love God, fears to offend him, fears to be separated from him, and his people for ever. The fear of

— THOU art my ALL !  
My strength in age ! my rise in low estate  
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth !—  
My light in darkness ! and my life in death  
My boast thro' time, bliss thro' eternity..

But to return. Although I imbibed  
ship's refined notions of virtue, and  
years, at times, talked much in his  
strain, I found those notions insufficient  
to serve me from falling into some vicious  
Nothing but the belief of the gospel could  
lead me entirely to renounce the vices and  
the world, and to *live godly, righteously*  
*and soberly* in so ungodly and dissipated an age  
where no motives held out by other systems are  
able to restrain the passions and evil propen-  
sities.

had great influence on the morals of mankind and in that point of view must be very valuable to society ; and this brought on more serious reflections.

I have for many years taken in several of the Reviews of new publications, which are published monthly, and I now begin to read some of the extracts which the Reviewers make from sermons and other books in divinity. In those extracts I frequently found weighty arguments in favour of christianity. About a year past in this way, during which time I was rather in a careless suspense, and yet I was more attentive to my words and actions ; and by degrees I began to relish divine subjects, and found that they elevated the mind and filled the soul with sublime ideas. I now began to read a little in the Bible, and took some pleasure in it ; and I became more and more serious and thoughtful. I had nearly finished a second volume of my life, which I intended soon to publish. I now read it over again, and crept out and put in again and again, as I thought that I had treated serious subjects with too much levity ; but after all the alterations I was not satisfied that in writing against fanaticism and enthusiasm, I had not said what might hurt some weak christians, or what might be by free thinkers brought against christianity. I was now also afraid, lest by ridiculing and laughing at enthusiasm and fanaticism, I should not only laugh some out of their enthusiasm, but of their religion also. For these, and other reasons of the same nature, I thought it best not to publish it, by which I have



beings I ever saw.

Her reason for being so was, "because I always thought she ought to be as good as God could." She, like some other ladies, had a good deal of sense, and very well understood the art of being elegant, but had not the least knowledge of religion beyond that of being as good as God, and by the bye it were to be wished that she had even known as much as that. As to church, or private devotion, she could not see what use it could be to her. As she was a Quaker, she did not know what she should do; she had never done any person any wrong; she had never slandered, backbited, or calumniated any person, nor did she know that she committed any other sin, and so she had no need of repentance or pardon.

In this state of affairs I sent to my late

“Sister Mary”

nothing more in religion. They also made me  
 re in love with christianity. I also sent for  
 hop Watson's Apology for the Bible, &c. in  
 ters to T. Paine ; Bishop Porteus's Compen-  
 m of the Evidences of Christianity, Butler's  
 ine Analogy, Paley's Evidences of Christi-  
 y, Pilgrim's Good Intent, Pascal's Thoughts,  
 dison's Evidences of Christianity, Conibear's  
 Revealed Religion, Madame de Genlis's Reli-  
 a the only Basis of Happiness and sound Phi-  
 sophy, with Observations on pretended modern  
 losophers, 2 vols. Jenkins's Reasonableness  
 Certainty of Christianity, and several others  
 he same tendency. Those excellent defences  
 revealed religion I read through, during which  
 d many struggles ; in the beginning I some-  
 es cried out in the words of Thomas, " Lord  
 lieve, help thou my unbelief : " before I had  
 l out those defences, I was not only almost, but  
 gether persuaded to be a christian. And I  
 e that I shall always endeavour to live as be-  
 eeth the gospel of Christ ; and, at times, I  
 an humble confidence that God has, or will,  
 lon all my past sins for the sake of Christ, and  
 his grace enable me to persevere in well do-  
 to the end of this transitory life, and then  
 rit me into that state where the wonders of his  
 ce, and the mysteries of his providence shall  
 ore clearly understood.

meant to inform you, that besides those books  
 ady mentioned, I sent for Bishop Horne's  
 nons, 4 vols. Carr's Sermons, Blair's Ser-  
 is, 5 vols. Scott's Christian Life, 5 vols. seve-

egan to read  
ead in the course of the week ; at last  
was read every day, and very often per  
other book in divinity, as Mrs. L. said  
preferred such kind of reading far  
reading of novels. So that for some  
have read more books on divinity than  
other subject ; and now Mrs. L. sees  
portant reasons for going to church  
&c.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c

*Alveston, Feb. 20th, 1803.*

I have now given the whole of what  
Mr. D. and will add no more, but that

I am

## LETTER XI.

—————Brief time  
ances quick in tread ; few hours and dark  
rain : those hours in frivolous employ  
ste not impertinent ; they ne'er return !  
deem it dulness to stand still and pause  
en dread Eternity hath claims so high.

DR. DODD.

FRIEND,

THE following letters were sent to Tom  
btless, an infidel, whose vices brought ruin  
self, and also on his family.

Sir,

so many years, you will perhaps be sur-  
to see my bad hand-writing again.—A  
me since, I found among my books a thin  
SS. in turning it over, I found copies of let-  
rich passed between you and me in the  
777 and 1778 : I read them over with  
concern, as I found in some of mine to you  
ndeavoured to weaken your belief in the  
authority of the Scriptures, and some of  
ssed doctrines which they contain. My  
dge is very circumscribed now, but at that  
was much more so, as I was but very little  
sted with men, and less with books, so that  
ot surprising that I should not be able  
et the sophistical arguments, and other  
ts of Chubb, Tyndal, Morgan, Collins,  
bury, Voltaire, &c. Nor was it possible  
should be able to detect the misrepresenta-

able confutations that had been published  
pose their folly and wickedness ; and as I  
ly ever attended any place of divine wor  
was scarcely possible for me, under these  
stances, to return to the path of truth. My  
was also rendered more difficult by my con  
ife, for I fell into some of the vices and fi  
he age, and vice never fails to drive us  
from truth and God.—If one who indulge  
elf in sinful practices should, like Pila  
What is truth ? he does not wait for an  
out dissolves the court of Conscience.

During those years I was also, as you  
aken up with the concerns of a very larg  
ess ; and, I am sorry to add, the great  
hat I derived from that business, rather  
drive from my thoughts those importa  
erns with which they should. more or le

been sent into the world by infidels. I read poetry, plays, novels, voyages, travels, &c. &c.

As not infatuated by the love of riches, but as it was with pleasure I first took into my very profitable trade, on very easy terms to them, and soon after that disposed of my sole concern. It is now near eight years I have retired to this place, nor have I been in business since. I retained a share of my business about two years and an half after I came to London, then made over the whole to my country friends, George Lackington, and those gentlemen were my partners before.

After my retreat, I pursued the same course of study until I was roused from my careless state of mind by observing the dreadful effects which attended the spreading of infidelity. The more I reflected, the more was I filled with horror at the moral depravity that I saw increasing in all ranks. From those reflections I was led to conclude, that the works which had produced such baleful effects, must be fatally defective. By degrees I laid my freethinking books aside, and began once more to study my Bible.

When I began that study I sent for several learned commentaries on the scriptures, and many other books in divinity, including answers that had been made to writers on the side of infidelity ; so that I am now convinced of the sophistry, misrepresentations, unfairness, and other vile arts with which their cause is surrounded.

read them with proper attention, to be  
 convinced of the truth of christianity.  
 a melancholy truth, that vice greatly ten-  
 pify the mind, and often makes us blind  
 truths; the late pious Bishop Hor-  
 " Midnight overwhelmeth not the ear!  
 " grosser darkness, than that which is  
 " duced upon the heart of man, when it  
 " from God, and is turned away from it  
 " He that followeth not Christ walketh  
 " ness,' because the light of life shineth  
 " upon his tabernacle!"

I have for some years been acquainted  
 history of Greece, and with the various  
 of the Grecian philosophers, yet the  
 pleasing form in which it is dressed up  
 thelemy's Travels of Anacharsis, induce  
 read it again lately, and by reading it I

shallow, superficial, pretended philoso-  
 our day, affect to disbelieve the Chris-  
 ines. Many of the philosophers, and  
 at men of Greece and Rome, who lived  
 ne of the apostles and their immediate  
 s, who had every opportunity of inquir-  
 he truth of what they asserted concern-  
 st, his miracles, death, resurrection,  
 , his sending down the Holy Spirit, mi-  
 gifts, &c. Those philosophers, states-  
 tiers, &c. were so thoroughly convinced  
 ith of what the apostles and followers of  
 erted, and of the doctrines they taught,  
 openly professed themselves to be chris-  
 hough they well knew that by so doing  
 ild be deprived of their riches, pomp and  
 ; they gladly embraced a life of pover-  
 iny, and suffering ; and at last shed their  
 he glorious cause.

scorching fire, the racking wheel,  
 scourging rod, and bloody steel ;  
 h ruthless instrument of pain  
 Tyranny could e'er devise,  
 hellish foes inflict, were vain,  
 ake the courage of the skies !  
 hopes no earthly terrors could subdue ;  
 immate happiness appear'd in view.

COURTIER.

eethinkers reject the miracles wrought  
 : and his followers, and yet they would  
 believe far greater miracles ; as they  
 rsuade us, that a poor carpenter's son,  
 ooks, or even a place to lay his head,



ed : and that these

their former prejudices and religious n  
uld quit all their friends and acquaintanc  
brace a life of poverty, endure unspe  
dships, submit to the greatest sufferings  
sonments, and the most painful deaths. 2  
s to propagate (according to infidels) wh  
st know to be a falsehood.

So that infidels who charge Christians w  
g credulous, are far more so themselve  
ing in reality the most credulous beings  
orld. Moreover, infidels know that not :  
s of divisible matter can perish, yet wou  
ve us believe that the soul, which is s  
material, indivisible, and immortal, can  
hilated.

There is yet a greater absurdity whi  
ould have us believe, viz. that millions o  
taken place without a cause, or that

ice ; some, who before they commenced  
 kers, were upright, honest, industrious  
 d as such were prosperous in their vari-  
 s of business ; on turning freethinkers be-  
 aves and cheats, debauchees, &c. Seve-  
 ese you well know ; their vile conduct  
 vell known to you, nor are you ignorant  
 in that they brought on themselves and  
 . I think you also knew A. B. and his  
 ; they, it is true, retained their honest  
 es ; but they learned very bad habits, took  
 ng and debauchery, which brought on A.  
 lful disorders ; he lived some years in a  
 e state, and died about three years since.  
 ther died a year before him. You also  
 at D. C. turned freethinker near thirty  
 nce, shut up his shop, left his wife and  
 to the parish, or to the wide world, sunk  
 among the dregs of society in London, and  
 enty years since was turned out of the  
 ospital incurable ; when I was in T—n last  
 e was in the poor-house in a miserable  
 body, and, no doubt, of mind also. J. D.  
 with other jovial companions, perhaps  
 en you was in London, saw, died soon  
 t time. T. A. ran off, and left five poor  
 girls with child by him. I have never  
 ard of him. I have not time to give you  
 of others.

horrid effects the principles of freethink-  
 had on yourself, your wife, and brother,  
 ou to reflect on ; I must just remark, that  
 your brother might now have been gen-

It is well known  
unbelievers have forsaken  
moral habits, and become depr  
in both body and mind. M  
ed to such an extremely wr  
be able to bear the miser  
brought on themselves, and  
life which was become a  
intolerable burden to them  
taken leave of this world  
some are in the road to it.  
your conduct has for man  
from subscribing myself,

*Alveston, Feb. 25, 1803*

Although I have trar  
yet I must inform you,  
became a freethinker, h  
free-thinker, but a *free-a*  
ate together for many y

## LETTER XII.

The Libertine his folly shall lament,  
 His blind extravagance that made him sell  
 Unfading bliss, and everlasting crowns,  
 Immortal transports, and celestial feasts,  
 For the short pleasure of a sordid sin,  
 For one fleet moment's despicable joy.  
 Too late, all lost, for ever lost,  
 Gives to his soul perpetual wounds.

E. ROWE.

Oh, Conscience, into what abyss of fears  
 And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which  
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd.

MILTON.

DEAR FRIEND;

I WILL now transcribe a copy of my second letter to Tom Thoughtless.

“ Sir,

I know not of any sight so shocking as that of a poor self-condemned infidel on a sick bed. While he suffers the most acute bodily pain, he has no cordial to cheer his drooping spirits. No! his mind labours under the most gloomy apprehensions! Those joyous companions with whom he used to dissipate his time and substance, are so far from giving him any comfort, that the sight of any of them adds to his misery; he is ready to curse them in the bitterness of his soul, for having been instrumental in perverting him. The weaker his body grows, the more strong does he find that reasoning faculty within him, and which he fancied would die with the body. How glad

rief ; but he is too late convinced and  
never cease to exist. Young says,

Men may live fools, but fools they c:

While in health, and high spirits, ·  
ical companions about him, he coul  
igion, and at hell, and even pass his  
awful Majesty of heaven and earth  
existence in question : could rep  
as a fanatic, a lunatic, or as a dow  
tor. This shocking delusion is now  
finds that the eyes and hand of C  
him, and that he must soon be drag  
ful tribunal : Now he would give ·  
an interest in that divine Intercess  
has so often laughed at and despis  
spair now seizes his mind, not a r  
pierce through the gloomy horror  
pray he cannot, nor has he a wish  
hell is already begun, and he dre

But shrieks in vain !---How wishfully she looks  
 On all she's leaving, now no longer her's !  
 A little longer, yet a little longer,  
 Oh might she stay, to wash away her stains  
 And fit her for her passage !---Mournful sight !  
 Her very eyes weep blood ;---and every groan  
 She heaves is big with horror.---But the foe,  
 Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,  
 Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on ;  
 Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,  
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin !

I did not intend to quote so much, yet I cannot help transcribing the following narration from Dr Young's *Centaur* not *Fabulous*.

' I am about to represent to you the last hour  
 ' of a person of high birth, and great parts.

' The *death-bed* of a profligate is next in horror  
 ' to that abyss to which it leads. And he that has  
 ' seen it, has more than *faith* to confirm him in his  
 ' creed. I see it now, For who can forget it ?--  
 ' Are there no flames and furies ?---You know not  
 ' then, what a guilty heart can feel. How dismal  
 ' it is ? The two great enemies of soul and body  
 ' *Sickness* and *Sin* sink and confound his friend  
 ' silence and darken the shocking scene. Sickness  
 ' excludes the light of heaven ; and sin its blessed  
 ' hope. *Oh ! double darkness.*

' See, how he lies, a sad deserted outcast, on  
 ' narrow isthmus, between time and eternity ! For  
 ' he is scarce alive. Lashed and overwhelmed on  
 ' one side, by the sense of sin ; on the other, by  
 ' the dread of punishment ! Beyond the reach of  
 ' human help, and in despair of divine !

the bolt that strikes him dead.  
' wretched wreck of man on the shore  
' and the next breath he draws blows him  
' ruin.

' The greatest profligate is, at least,  
' tary saint, at such a sight ; for this is a  
' plucks off the mask of folly, strips  
' gay disguise, which glittered in the face  
of this world's mummary, and make him  
to be folly, to the greatest fool.

' Is not the death-bed of a profligate  
natural and powerful antidote for the  
his example ? Heals not the bruised soul  
wound it gave ? Intends not Heaven  
struck with the terrors of such an exit,  
provide comfort for our own ? Would  
who departs obdurate from it, continue  
though one rose from the dead ? For such

The sad evening before the death of that noble  
th, whose last hours suggested these thoughts,  
as with him. No one was there, but his  
sician, and an intimate whom he loved, and  
om he had ruined. At my coming in he said,  
and the physician are come too late.—I  
e neither life nor hope. You both aim at  
acles—you would raise the dead.’

said, Heaven was merciful.—(He replied,)  
Or I could not have been thus guilty. What  
it not done to *bless* and to *save me*? I have  
n too strong for Omnipotence! I have pluck-  
down ruin.”

said the Blessed Redeemer.—(On which he  
)

Hold! Hold! You wound me!—That is the  
k on which I split—I denied ‘his name.’

Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take  
r thing from the physician, he lay silent, as  
as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the  
ck struck. Then he with vehemence cried

Oh, Time! Time! It is fit thou shouldest  
is strike thy murderer to the heart. How art  
ou fled for ever!—A month!—Oh, for a single  
ek! I ask not for years; though an age were  
little for the much I have to do.”

On my saying, We could not do too much :  
at Heaven was a blessed place!—(He said)

So much the worse. ‘Tis lost! Heaven is to  
e the severest part of hell.’

Soon after, I proposed prayer. (On which he  
id



‘ Keep those tears for myself. —  
hee.—Dost weep for me ? That’s cruel  
an pain me more !’

‘ Here his friend, too much affected, wept  
for him. But he said, ‘ No, stay.  
I have *hope*.—Therefore hear me. Have I  
not talked ? How madly thou hast  
acted and believed ? But look on my present  
condition—a full answer to thee and myself. Thou  
art full of all weakness and pain ; but my soul, raised  
up by torment to greater strength and  
full power to reason ; full mighty  
And that, which thus triumphs within  
of mortality, is doubtless *immortal*.—  
a *Deity*, nothing less than an *Almighty*  
flict what I feel.’

‘ I was about to speak, when he very  
ly said,

‘ No, no ! let me speak on. I have  
to speak.—My much injured friend !  
in ruins—in scattered

the flames :—that is not an everlasting flame ; it is not an unquenchable fire.’

Now were we struck? Yet, soon after, still  
 ! With what an eye of distraction, with  
 a face of despair, he cried out,  
 ‘ principles have poisoned my friend ; my  
 vagance has beggared my boy ; my un-  
 less has murdered my wife ! And is there  
 er hell? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet most  
 gent, Lord God ! Hell itself is a refuge, if  
 es me from thy frown.’

Soon after his understanding failed. His ter-  
 imagination uttered horrors not to be repeat-  
 ever forgot. And ere the sun arose, the  
 young noble, ingenious, accomplished, and  
 wretched Altamont expired.’

foolish man ! no more thy soul deceive !  
 e is but the surest way to live. BROOME.

ieve we should have many such dreadful  
 les on record, were clergymen called to visit  
 ith-bed of infidels, as in this case ; but few  
 will consent for that to be done ; for al-  
 they may see that they have been fatally  
 d ; yet a state of desperation will prevent  
 rom calling on God themselves, or request-  
 y one to do it for them. But to return to  
 . I must inform you, that it was not by  
 reading of defences of Christianity, &c.  
 was enabled to discover its truth, and be-  
 s doctrines. I was for some time in a  
 f suspense, doubt and distraction. But  
 e pure precepts of the gospel began to have

much talking, &c. By caution, I set  
in a great measure, to refrain from  
into violent passions on small prov-  
be short, I endeavoured to resist eve-  
pensity and disposition, and I pray  
assistance to enable me so to do ; and  
myself much freed from evil words,  
thoughts ; and found much satisfac-  
mind on being able to conquer bad ha-

I had not long lived as much like a  
I could, before I begun to believe like  
words of Christ were verified in me  
he, *ye will do the will of God, ye shall*  
*doctrines which I teach, whether they*  
And I cannot help believing, that su-  
and sincerely perform their duty towa-  
man, will, by some means or other, I  
knowledge and belief of all such ti-

————— Man all immortal, hail !  
 Hail, heav'n---All-lavish of strange gifts to man !  
 Thine all the glory ; man's the boundless bliss :  
 Oh, may I breathe no longer, than I breathe  
 My soul in praise to Him, who gave my soul,  
 And all her infinite of prospect fair.

DR. YOUNG,

Devotion elevates the soul to its native dignity when renewed by divine grace it as naturally tends to the great source of its happiness, as fire does towards the sun, or as water towards the sea. While others are saying, *Who will shew us any good Who will shew us the way to be happy ?* The Christian says, *Lift up thou the light of thy countenance upon me.* You know where it is also said that *God will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon him.* In all these changes and troubles of this mortal state, he has a divine cordial to refresh and cheer his spirits when weak and faint ; even death itself cannot terrify him who stedfastly believes in him *who is the resurrection and the life.* No one ever heard of christian that was troubled, or terrified in his conscience when he came to die, for having been christian ; but on the contrary, tens of thousands have in their last hours, set their seal to the truth of its divine doctrines, and have quitted this life in *certain hope and joyful expectation of a blessed immortality.*

The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
 Is privileg'd beyond the common walk  
 Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heav'n.

of course in my life. I hope that you  
what a dreadful delusion you have for  
years been under. Should that not be  
would wish you to remember that a delusion  
greatly the advantage of you. Were  
for him to be in a delusion, it must be  
delusion that affords such sources of  
this state of existence, and even in the  
death. And in case there should be  
state, you will not be able to laugh at  
should the infidel be in a delusion! The  
fatal dye! will then be cast, and all is  
for ever!

I am, Sir,  
Your

*Aiveston, Feb. 27, 1803.*

Although I have transcribed this letter,  
yet I must inform you, that the  
whom this, and the preceding one  
leads so bad a life, that I have but small

## LETTER XIII.

———"Those dreadful dangers past,  
 Knowledge will dawn and bless the mind at last."

DEAR FRIEND,

NOT many miles from this place lives my friend Dick Thrifty, who was introduced to you in a former letter. I lately paid him a visit, and soon suspected that some alteration had taken place in Dick's sentiments from the change which I perceived in his conduct. I informed you, that when Dick commenced freethinker, he was not always able to resist the temptations of immodest men. At this interview I remarked that he was disgusted with a genteel dressed man for having talked loosely in the absence of the ladies; repeated the two well lines of Pope,

Immodest words admit of no defence,  
 For want of decency is the want of sense.

I also observed that he was displeased with another of the company for speaking disrespectfully of the clergy in general. "Whenever I hear (said any person) vilify the clergy as a body, I am bound to conclude that he is not only an enemy to religion, but also a foe to morality, and of course a great enemy to society. I think it is Addison who says, That such as are prejudiced against the names religion, church, priest, and so forth, should consider the clergy as so many teachers, the churches as schools, and their

erected at the public charge, in every country ; at which lectures, all ranks are without distinction, were obliged to be for their general improvement. And would wretches would they think those men should endeavour to defeat the purpose of an institution !”

I was also glad to find that Dick was an encourager of Sunday-schools, and also of schools for the poor who are unable to send their children's schooling. He informed some gentlemen of his neighbourhood who were not wont to such schools, merely because they were not wont to subscribe a trifle toward their support, yet, said he, those gentlemen think themselves christians !

It perhaps may appear rather odd, to remember that, many years since, Dick, in his first thought

Attributes of God, and very seriously advised him to read it with attention ; and this too at a time when he was very sceptical himself : But I strongly suspect that Dick is quite altered in his principles :

Formerly, Dick used to assert that all the precepts of morality contained in the gospel were taught by the heathen philosophers. But now he is convinced of his mistake, and he has discovered that their best precepts were derived from divine revelation, partly through the Jews who were scattered amongst all nations, and partly from the Old Testament after it was translated into Greek. Josephus has fully proved this point.

Formerly, Dick thought that Socrates was a more exalted personage than Christ ; now he asserts, that Christ was a far superior character to Socrates, and that the morality which he taught is the most pure, and best calculated to make mankind happy,—that a nation of *real* christians would be a heaven upon earth.

Some years since, Dick would talk much about the charming liberty of thinking freely, enjoyed by such as shake off the fetters which priests had invented on mankind ; now he does not scruple to acknowledge that, upon the whole, he thinks a *real* christian has greatly the advantage, even in this life, of the unbeliever. I can, (said he to a friend one day,) almost believe Bishop Horne's description of the Christian religion. He then took down a volume of the good Bishop's sermons, and read the following passage :



' ful through pain, while they come  
 ' and precious promises made to  
 ' ful through hope, which depends  
 ' accomplishment ; cheerful through  
 ' doing acts of mercy and loving  
 ' they come to that land of plenty  
 ' shall want ; to those regions of joy  
 ' sorrow shall be for ever excluded

While my friend Dick was reading  
 passage, he seemed animated ;  
 more so while I read the following  
 Young's Night Thoughts.

Religion's ALL. Descending from  
 To wretched man — — — —  
 Religion ; Providence ; an after-state  
 Here is firm footing ; here is solid rock  
 This can support us ; all is sea beside  
 Sinks under us ; be storms and then  
 Good man fastens on th

a person has once gone such lengths in infidelity as Dick had, it is hard to return to that pure, open simplicity which the gospel requires of such as profess to believe its doctrines. As Dick's conversation is different from what it used to be, so also is his conduct, as I remarked in many instances. His compassion for the labouring poor is much increased, and he does much good among them ; he not only relieves such as apply to him but he inquires after objects of distress ; and, at the same time, he is careful not to encourage idleness, drunkenness, &c.

Mr. D. and Mr. C. were near neighbours to each other, and acquaintances of Dick ; these neighbours had conceived great animosity to each other ; Dick set about reconciling them. One day, when Mr. D. was speaking very ill-naturedly of Mr. C. Dick desired him not to bear Mr. C. so much ill will, for, said he, I have heard Mr. C. speak very well of you. This softened Mr. D. a good deal. At another time, Mr. C. was very violent in his conversation against Mr. D. Dick advised him to forget and forgive, as he was persuaded Mr. D. had done ; he speaks kindly of you, and is, I believe, sorry that trifles should so long have interrupted good neighbourhood between you and him. By this method Dick in a short time made them better friends than they had ever been before. *Blessed is the peace-maker*, saith Christ. Dick is still happy if he can reconcile any of his acquaintance to each other ; but he now will not effect it by saying what is not strictly true, as he did in the above

## LETTER XIV.

The virtues grow on *immortality*;  
That Root destroy'd they wither and expire.  
A Deity *believ'd* will naught avail;  
*Rewards* and *punishments* make God ador'd;  
And *hopes* and *fears* give conscience all her pow

DEAR FRIEND,

IN giving you my further observatic  
ick Thrifty, I will continue to set them do  
early as I can, as they occurred.

I found him one morning with Law's S  
all to a Holy Life, and Taylor's Holy I  
nd Holy Dying, by his side; in his han  
e Whole Duty of Man. What! a philos  
ading the "Whole Duty of Man?" Ha

any work that ever had so great and lasting sale, it being a century and a half since it was first published : the other works of the same author have also had a great sale : his Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety should be read more than it is : his Ladies' Calling, and his Gentleman's Calling, are now much neglected as most of our ladies and gentlemen have callings of a very different nature, or rather, as it appears, have no calling at all.

Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, he said, was also an excellent work. I also joined in its praise. Law, in his Serious Call, he thought, had some of the most convincing arguments he ever met with, and his Characters were master-pieces of the kind. I said that I had lately read it with great pleasure, and I hoped with some profit."

But, Dick, have you discarded the old heathen moralists ?

" No, I believe I shall sometimes dip into them as long as I live ; I think, with you, that I have derived much benefit from reading them."

I told him, while I was reading Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, &c. I had often fancied myself a great philosopher, and conceived that my passions were subdued.

" Why that is just my case, and perhaps a hour after I have indulged those fine ideas, I suffer an old woman, or a servant, to disturb, or even destroy, my fine philosophical tranquillity ; and then I am ashamed to find myself such a poor weak mortal."

" Virtue is kept alive by care and toil."

long broken off, by my having contracted a conversion to those pious writers, because threatened freethinkers with hell ; yet we have some good friends again : so that when I look into any of those books, it seems like an old sensible acquaintance that I had known for many years ; I am much pleased while conversing on old subjects ; and, though I do not approve of every thing he says, yet the conversation upon the whole may be pleasing and improving."

Dick, said I, you used to be open and ingenuitous ; I have freely confessed to you, and have sincerely repented of my long apostasy from the truth, and humbly hope for pardon and mercy through that Saviour whom you and I do believe : tell me, are not you also convinced of your error ? Are you not in heart a christian ?

so that you will not be much surprised if I have been affected pretty much like yourself, by remarking the same events. I shall carry my remarks further back than you have done. You know that before the French revolution took place I had some young men and boys in my house as apprentices and shopmen. I have reason to think that those young people were not ignorant of my sentiments ; for as they dined with me and my friends, they must have, at times, heard free conversations, jokes on priests, &c. if not worse : for although I was not fond of propagating infidelity, yet from my friends, and perhaps from myself also, they must know that I paid no attention to religion. It is also likely that they read my free-thinking books. They also knew that I did not attend at any place of worship, nor did I require them to do it ; that my whole family spent undays in idle amusements. Those young men left me, and began the world without any sense of religion. Several of them, I believe, were rethinkers ; nearly the whole of them dissipated the whole of what property they had of their own, got into debt, and became bankrupts. But though I saw the effects of infidelity in them, I was not properly affected by it. But since the French revolution, when I perceived the sad effects produced by the spreading of infidelity, I began to think more seriously on the consequences ; but I was not fully acquainted with the extent of its mischief until I came into the country, and found that it had infected all ranks, from the castle to the cottage.

*A new world rises and new manners reign."*

poverty and afflictions, used to de-  
solation from the hopes of a b  
come ; but Paine and Co. have de-  
their only comfort and support,  
discontented with their station, and  
chief. Many that used to be cons  
on Sundays, now go to the ale-hou  
encourage one another in irrelig  
Many that used to read their bibl  
become better husbands, better  
subjects, better neighbours, &c. no  
into it at all, it is only to endeavou  
ridicule.

“ The hopes of heaven, and the  
now am fully convinced certainly  
influence on the conduct of thousa  
laugh at any talk of the day of jud  
and hell ; and having got rid of tl

great prevalence of infidelity and its immoral tendency, one of his neighbours, a very decent looking man, came in, who, I learnt in the course of conversation, had lately been a very wicked infidel and a rebel, but had repented of his infidelity, and was become a loyal subject and a pious christian.

He informed us, that while he lived in London (which was about four or five years before this conversation) he worked in a shop with twelve other men, eleven of whom and himself were infidels, and that the whole of them were rebels. To such a height of wickedness and infatuation had these poor wretches arrived, that six of them set out one day with a fixed determination to kill — a certain person. In the Strand, one of the most desperate of these execrable villains was taken so very ill as to be able to go no further; but this did not deter the others, but on they went to perpetrate the dreadful deed, which they would have effected, had not an uncommon circumstance taken place which prevented the horrid crime from being committed. This circumstance I cannot relate, as the mentioning that would discover the person they intended to murder.

I also observed, that the doctrine of rewards and punishments were taught in a confused and imperfect manner by the old heathens; that the belief of those doctrines, and the fear of the avenging gods, had very great influence on the moral conduct of mankind in general: and it is worth remarking that Juvenal, in his second satire, imputes the shocking and detestable crimes which disgraced Rome in his days to the infidel notions that then prevailed among them.



... present advantage  
approbation of virtue : so that, :  
it was the mixture of truth in it :  
its utility ; which is well stated l  
*judicious* Hooker, in treating c  
‘ Seeing therefore it doth thus a  
venerable author, ‘ that the safety  
pendeth upon religion ; that relig  
loved perfecteth man’s abilities u  
various services in the comm  
men’s desire is, in general, to h  
but the true ; and whatever good  
out of their religion, who embrace  
true, a false, the roots thereof ar  
of the light of truth, intermingled  
ness of error ; because no religion  
only consist of truths, we have  
that all true virtues are to honour  
their parent, and all well-ord

of awe ; the sacredness of oaths is manifest and necessary ; and they that hold that perjury will be punished, are certainly more to be trusted, than those who think a false oath will be attended with no ill consequences. It is beyond all question, that in a policed city, even a bad religion is better than none.'—"The Senate of Rome, which almost totally consisted of Atheists, both in theory and practice, believing neither in Providence nor a future state. It was a meeting of philosophers, of votaries of pleasure and ambition ; all very dangerous sets of men, and who, accordingly, overthrown the republic."

'I would not willingly lie at the mercy of an atheistical prince, who might think it his interest to have me pounded in a mortar : I am certain it would be my fate. And were I a sovereign, I would not have about me any atheistical courtiers, whose interest it might be to poison me, as then I must every day be taking alexipharmics ; so necessary is it both for princes and people, that their minds be thoroughly imbued with an idea of a Supreme Being, the Creator, Avenger, and Rewarder."

This subject is now no longer to be disputed at all, as we have seen such dreadful effects of infidelity since it has been propagated among the people at large.

"I confess, (said Dick) that I was long in an error on this head. I, like many other freethinkers, on observing that fraud and other vices were committed by such as passed for christians ; and that, among those who were sceptics, I knew se-

have scarce any more religion than he that  
live and die as ignorant and stupid with re  
divine subjects as hogs. So that in fact th  
not be said to believe or disbelieve in chris  
although they are denominated christi  
have reason to believe that there are thous  
England who never were in any place of  
worship in the whole course of their live  
many of those that do by chance go  
church, know no more of the matter than  
as never go at all. And there is great re  
think that many who pass for christians a  
ists in principles, as well as practical kna  
certain author says, " I know there are in  
and principle, as well as in practice, who t  
honesty as well as religion, a mere cheat  
a very consistent conduct, reasoning, h  
solved deliberately to do whatsoever by p  
not then are able for their private advantag

was lately told of a grocer, who, on a Sunday evening, used to call his shopman, and address him in the following manner : " John, have it the dried berries with the currants?" " Sir." " Have you put the ash leaves with it?" " Yes, Sir." " Have you put the sand in the moist sugar?" " Yes, Sir." " Then, come to prayer."

It also give you one instance of this kind from within my own observation. About twelve years after I first became acquainted with a society of infidels, there was one very young man named who was an advocate for atheism, and was a student, on charity, in a dissenting academy; and used to boast of the deceptions he made use of to deceive the heads of the academy. He informed us, that at the stated time of prayer, when they all kneeled down in the room, with their faces towards the east, he used to conceal a card in his hand, on which he had a composed form, set down in short-

So that when it came to his turn to pray corporally, he read his card: and he was enabled to possess a fine gift in prayer. This infidel also boasted of the deceptions which he used to play on others; he would pretend to piety to religious people, and borrow books and sermons. Not long after this he deceived and seduced his infidel friend, who introduced him to the academy. He was for some reason or other discharged from the academy; had that not been the case, some congregation might have been deceived by his abilities and pretensions to piety, and have had an atheist for their pastor.

many are there to be found who deliberately commit those sins. How is it possible for one to suppose that such can believe the above text, and hundred others of the same import. We know that a person may be precipitated into grievous sins, and yet may be called a believer, although weak one; but is it possible for a person to year after year, in the deliberate commission of any great known sin, and really believe that *he has pointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and reward every man according to the deed done in the body, whether they have been good or bad.* Indeed the scriptures rank such among *unbelievers*; and freethinkers should rank them as believers, but among their own class. In Gifford's 49th sermon, vol. 2, is the following passage: "I address myself next to those who pretend to believe the gospel, and yet neglect

ness and pleasures, and vanities of life, as  
h led away by the fashions and dissipated  
ers which they see around them, as if they  
ved this world was the only place where they  
cted happiness. And yet they profess to  
ve in a religion that will reward all who obey  
nd punish all who disobey it.

If you really believe all this, the pleasures of  
world will appear of little value to you, com-  
d with the happiness of the next ; and the  
rest restraints of religion, instead of being  
ght hardships, will be received with cheer-  
ss. Is this the case ? If you are a true be-  
r, the answer is plain ; yet this contradiction  
een your belief and your practice, makes it,  
r, too plain, this is not the case. The matter  
resolves itself into this, that you are in the  
tion with the infidel, only to his disbelief you  
ypocrisy.

If you are under the influence of *self-deceit*,  
magine you are more sincere in your belief  
ese things than you really are, put your sin-  
y to the test ; try yourself by an easy expe-  
nt. You are assured, that if you take proper  
, you may get possession of a considerable  
ne. If you really believe this information,  
will you act ? Will you not take every me-  
in your power that leads to the possession of  
Our blessed Saviour has placed this matter in  
ame light. If a man believed there was a  
ure in a field, would he not sell all he had and  
he field ? In the affairs of this world, you  
e of a man's being sincere in his belief, by

or bad. You say you believe all that does not produce a christian life. A hypocritical pretences. Would he fall from a precipice if he *really* believed it would receive him? Those who have faith, and those who pretend to have a holy life out of the question, are alike."

Some of those ungodly pretences and ananities are so very ignorant of its meaning, they think that because Christ died for us, is the only part of the gospel that God will, however wicked their sins have been, pardon them, provided they repent as they call it, on their death-bed. The Bible tells us of a shocking wicked man who lived a very profligate way of life, because that if he could but say three words, "Lord, have mercy on me," before he died, he was forgiven. It seems he even forgot the

Christ's sake. Gilpin, in his excellent sermon on Christ's promise to the thief on the cross, says, "I have seldom seen sickness draw on a change of life. The sinner has generally returned, after his recovery, to his old habits. All therefore that a minister of the gospel can say, is only this, that *God has no where promised in the covenant of grace, forgiveness to any repentance, but what is followed by a holy life ; and if men are saved, after a course of wickedness, on death-bed repentance, they are not saved according to any known conditions of the gospel.* Gilpin's sermons, vol. ii, p. 122, 2d edition.

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Fatally he errs  
 Whose hope fore-runs repentance, and who presumes  
 That God will pardon when he's tir'd of sin,  
 And like a stale companion casts it off.  
 Oh ! arrogant, delusive, impious thought,  
 To meditate commodious truce with heaven,  
 When death's swift arrow smites him unprepar'd,  
 And that protracted moment never comes,  
 Or comes too late : Turn then, presumptuous man,  
 Turn to the sinner, —————  
 Who died reviling, there behold thy doom.

CUMBERLAND'S CALVARY.

I have also met with many who keep a shorter account with God ; they mistake the means for the end. When they can find time to go to church, it is not with any view to obtain grace and strength to enable them to forsake their bad practices ; they have not the least inclination to alter their wicked course of life : but think that by going to church and begging pardon, their old score is



was  
tle.

I am,  
Dear friend



## LETTER XV.

“ Consider man as *mortal*, all is dark  
“ And wretched; *Reason* weeps at it

DEAR FRIEND,

WHILE Dick and I were  
dinner on the important objects ;  
last chapter, we were astonished  
tion of a lady in company, who  
told us, that she !

————“ A serious thing to die ! My soul !  
 “ What a strange moment must it be, when near  
 “ Thy journey’s end thou hast the gulf in view !  
 “ That awful gulf no mortal e’er repass’d  
 “ To tell what’s doing on the other side !

But if she was but sure of being annihilated, it would take a weight off her spirits that sometimes oppressed her much.

I am well informed that this lady is very amiable. She is about forty. During thirty years which she lived with her father, she was a very dutiful daughter ; the ten that she has been a wife, she ever has been, and still is,

“ Blest with temper, whose unclouded ray  
 “ Can make to-morrow, cheerful as to-day ;  
 “ She never answers ’till her husband cools,  
 “ And if she rules him, never shews she rules.  
 “ Charms by accepting, by submitting ways,  
 “ Yet has her humour most when she obeys.”

Her life has been a life of innocence ; the continued ill treatment which she for years received from some of her relations, could never put her out of temper, or cause her to utter an ill-natured word ; or to be guilty of an unkind action. She possesses an uncommonly sympathizing, feeling heart, is very kind and charitable to the poor.

That so charming and virtuous a lady as this should wish that existence might terminate with this short life, is, I believe, not a common circumstance. On our expressing our surprise, and requesting to be made acquainted with her reasons for so unnatural a wish, she said, that “ she

ed much in private. She  
had ever said or done any thing wrong  
she was ignorant of divine things, an  
difference towards them ; and having  
her mind, rather than run the haza  
eternally miserable, she had many tim  
to be annihilated." She said, these  
thoughts were not lasting. she was  
happy. Mrs. Rowe thus describes  
mind nearly similar.

— Starts at the awful prospect of the  
Still fears to explore the dark and unkn  
Still backward shrinks and meditates  
Spins out the time, and lingers in deb  
Displeas'd to try an unexperienc'd sta

*If the righteous are scarcely saved, 't  
— and the ungodly appear? And*

The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,  
 To drink the spirit of the golden Day,  
 And triumph in existence ; and couldst know,  
 No motive, but my bliss ! and hast ordain'd  
 A rise in blessing ! with the *Patriarch's* joy.  
 Thy call, I follow to the land *unknown* ;  
 I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust ;  
 Or life, or death, is equal ; neither weighs ;  
 All weighs in this---O let me live to thee.

This, Madam, (continued Dick) is the only disposition that can possibly make us happy : the good Doctor appears to have had that faith and trust in God, which every real christian should have. In another place, he says,

If, sick of folly I relent ; Christ writes  
 My name in heav'n, with that inverted spear  
 (A spear deep dipt in blood !) which pierc'd his side,  
 And open'd there a font for all mankind,  
 Who strive to combat crimes, to drink and live ;  
 This, only this, subdues the *Fear of Death*.

The parents of this lady I find are called good kind of people ; when they have no company at home, they go to church once of a Sunday ; are kind, obliging neighbours, good to the poor, &c. but it does not appear that they consider themselves possessed of an immortal part, which must be happy or miserable to all eternity.

They have, it seems, a Bible in their house, carefully locked up. For the first ten years after they were married, this bible was brought downstairs once in a year, or once in two years at farthest, to insert in the blank leaf the names of their children, together with the year, day, and

the eldest daughters were always re  
the ages of the younger part of th  
save them the trouble of looking  
blank leaf.

Although one cannot help remark  
cern, that some of those who are ac  
the theory of religion, and who, t  
knowledge, or for worse purposes  
unseasonably, are yet known to be  
the performance of the duties it  
some that say little, and know less  
such who in the higher walks of life  
that important subject, and bring  
dren in gross ignorance of religion,  
be blameable in a very high degre  
(saith God) *perish for want of kn*  
really astonishing that mankind sh  
in acquiring

replied, "A fine old man." What do you think Jesus Christ is? "A hopeful youth," was the reply. What do you think your soul is? "A bone in my back," was the answer.

I am sorry to say, that this excellent knowledge in divine subjects but little exceeds of Pemble's poor old man; but in sincerity and openness of heart, I never saw one that exceeded her.

I am, dear friend,  
Your's.

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## LETTER XVI.

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Hell of Heaven.

PARADISE LOST.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN October 1793, S. P. Peach, Esq. being Major of the Tockington Volunteers, gave an entertainment to his corps, and others of his neighbours, in honour of Lord Nelson's glorious victory. This was done on the lawn before his house. The good cheer, the company, music, lights, bonfire, fire-works, &c. had a wonderful effect on the poor countrymen; one of them, in raptures, exclaimed, (by my side) "This is heaven on earth!" Upon which another of our volunteers very sincerely and earnestly declared, that he did not think that heaven was half so fine a place." This had not the least appearance of le-

quietly away, held forth on the nap, all good people enjoy after death at the will of God; during which she shewed patience. The divine still kept on, & on the glory, splendour, &c. of heaven; patience being quite tired out, she said, "Don't tell me a long tale about Heaven; Old England, and the Masses for me."

Were it only a few poor ploughing Marsh-Common farmer's wife, that thoughts of the happiness of a future life should not be so much surprised; but reason to think that there are thousands no better opinion of heavenly pleasures than poor untaught creatures that have as little ideas above the hogs they feed, or the swine. The lady that was introduced

ever than go to heaven ; that she had not conceived very favourable ideas of the happiness there to be enjoyed ; and as she had no knowledge of or relish for divine things, she did not see how she could comfortably spend an eternity in a place where nothing else was going forward. I fear the lady has, in giving us her own thoughts, given us the thoughts of thousands ; and I think she reasoned well. There cannot be the least doubt that the reason why many wish to go to heaven, is not from any love they have for God or heaven ; but as they know that there are but two places, they wish to go there to avoid hell. How many are there that think the sabbath a very tiresome day, because they have no relish for religious duties ; nay how many of those who go to church not only do not find any pleasure there, but are glad when the service is over ? What enjoyment then can such expect in heaven ? I well remember that both I and my companions formerly used to laugh at the thoughts of going to heaven ; and were so profane as to say that we should not like for ever to sit on a cloud and sing hallelujah ; and I fear we spoke the real sentiments of many more. Before any one can properly wish for heaven, or enjoy it hereafter, he must repent, and pray until God give him a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within him. *Old things must be done away, all things must become new.* And then he will be meet to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light.

But to return. When the lady had expressed her mean ideas of the joys of heaven, Dick began to spout away.



With an end  
 Thro' habitable space, wherever born,  
 Howe'er endow'd ! To live free citizen  
 Of universal nature ; to lay hold  
 By more than feeble *faith* on the Supre:  
 To call heav'n's unfathomable mines  
 Our own ! To rise in science as in bliss  
 Initiate in the secrets of the skies !  
 To read creation, in its mighty plan ;  
 In the bare bosom of the Deity !  
 To see before each glance of piercing t  
 All cloud, all shadows, blown remote ;  
 No mystery—but that of love divine—  
 From darkness, and from dust, to such  
 Love's element ; true joy's illustrious  
 From earth's sad contrast (now deplor  
 What exquisite vicissitude of fate !  
 Blest absolution of our blackest hour  
 ———These are thoughts that make  
 The wise illumine ; aggrandise the gi

How, Madam, do you like such  
 this? " O the description is delightful  
 to such

Dost hear ? or sporting in my brain  
 What wildly-sweet delirium reign !  
 Lo ! 'mid Elysium's balmy groves,  
 Each happy shade transported roves,  
 I see the living scene display'd,  
 Where rills and breath-gales sigh murmuring through  
 the shades. FRANCIS.

She liked the christian's heaven best, and, smiling, said, that as we seemed to be acquainted with the country, she should be glad if we would give her some further account of it. We quoted the following passages.

Look up my soul, pant toward th' eternal hills :  
 Those heav'ns are fairer than they seem ;  
 There pleasures all sincere glide on crystal rills ;  
 There not a drag of guilt defiles,  
 Nor grief disturbs the stream !  
 That Canaan knows no noxious thing,  
 No curs'd soil, no tainted spring,  
 Nor roses grow on thorns, nor honey wears a sting.  
 DR. WATT'S LYRIC POEMS.

I knew a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth ; how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful (or possible) for man to utter.

ST. PAUL.

——— What is death, that I should fear it ?  
 To die ! why 'tis to triumph ; 'tis to join  
 The great assembly of the good and just ;  
 Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints !  
 Oh, 'tis to join the band of holy men  
 Made perfect by their sufferings ! 'Tis to meet  
 My great progenitors ; they, with whom the Lord  
 Design'd to hold familiar converse ! 'Tis to see

Who would not die that we may live for  
MRS

Let us suppose a man blind and deaf from birth, who being grown up to man's estate, by the dead-palsy, or some other cause, loses his feeling, tasting, and smelling; at the same time has the impediment of his eyes removed, and the film taken off his eyes, so that the five senses are to us, that the touch and smell were to him. And any other conception of a more refined and extensive perception were to him as inconceivable, as to us that which will one day be adapted to perceptions of things which "eye has not seen, nor hath it entered into the heart to conceive." And it would be just as unreasonable for him to conclude, that the loss of those senses could not possibly be succeeded by a new mode of perception; as in a modern freethinker.

ported ; and you have some faint glimmering of the extatic state of the soul in that article which he emerges from this sepulchre of flesh in life and immortality.

▲ADDISON.

Who would not willingly leave a *foolish, forward, ill-natured* world, for the blessed society of wise friends and *perfect lovers*? What a felicity must it be to spend an eternity in such a noble conversation! where we shall hear the deep *philosophy* of heaven communicated *with mutual freedom* in the wise and amiable discourses of *angels and glorified spirits*: who without any reserve or affectation of mystery, without *passion, or interest, or peevish contention for victory*, do freely *philosophize*, and *mutually* impart the treasures of each other's knowledge. For since all saints there, are great philosophers, and all philosophers perfect saints, we must needs *suppose knowledge and goodness, wisdom and charity* to be equally intermingled throughout all their conversations; being so, what can be imagined more delightful! When therefore we shall leave this *impertinent, unsocial* world, and all our *good old friends* that have gone to heaven before us, meet us as soon as we are landed on the shore of *eternity*, and with infinite congratulations for our safe arrival, shall conduct us into the company of the *patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs*, and introduce us into an intimate acquaintance with them, and with all those brave and generous souls who by their *glorious examples* have recommended themselves to the world; when we shall be familiar friends with

Newton, Locke, Boyle, &c.  
Man of Ross, Dr. Johnson, J. Har  
and others, but also Pythagoras, S  
Aristotle, Epictetus, Cicero, Cato, &

I advised our good lady to read  
Christian Life, particularly the fi  
also Sherlock, on the Happiness of  
future state ; and Dr. Watts, on th  
Separate Spirits. I also told her t  
find some rational, and many amus  
the happiness of the celestial re  
Rowe's works. I will conclude  
with a few lines of that pious lady.

O, come ! ye sacred gusts, ye pure d  
Ye heav'nly sounds, ye intellectual s  
Ye gales of paradise, that lull to res  
And fill with silent calm the peacefu  
transporting hopes, that

## LETTER XVII.

Thus *Earth*, and all that earthly minds admire,  
 Is swallow'd in *Eternity's* vast round.  
 To that stupendous view when souls awake,  
*Time's* toys subside ; and *equal* all below.

DR. YOUNG.

DEAR FRIEND,

I NOW sit down to give you a few more particulars relating to my conversion to christianity. My conversion was not instantaneous, but progressive ; for, in retreating from the cause of infidelity, I disputed every inch of ground before I relinquished it. I found it impossible long to remain a downright atheist, but was sceptical for some years ; and I even had an atheistical pamphlet, which was hard to be come at, reprinted, on hearing that the author had in great haste taken away nearly the whole of his own impression from the different booksellers where they had been left for sale. I also advised a Scotch bookseller to reprint another work in the cause of infidelity ; which he did, and I purchased many of the impression and sold them. During this period I did not think that the belief, or disbelief, of any article of faith, had any influence on the morals of mankind.

About nine or ten years since, one of the French emigrants wanted me very much to print translation from the French of an atheistical work ; but having begun to see the bad effects of such publications, he could not prevail upon me

doctrine; but as I could not  
Thoughts of Dr Young, his strong  
favour of the soul's immateriality,  
prevented me from settling in  
important article. I also once did  
not laugh and think me still dream  
the finest poem I had ever read  
which I reasoned thus. As I ne  
position equal to that which I re  
and as from the ideas which I re  
I awoke, it appeared a thousand  
tiful than any thing I could comp  
therefore my soul must be immat  
wise I could not, while in a sta  
combined and arranged such a  
ful and delightful ideas as to m  
creation. On this head Bishop F  
we have no reason to think ou  
and he in

only speaks of our common dreams, which was by no means the case of mine.

The following lines were often impressed on my mind, and were repeated by me times without number, when alone :

—————Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself and startles at destruction ?  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;  
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter.  
And intimates eternity to man.  
Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !

ADDISON'S CATO.

It is not my design to adduce the proofs of those doctrines that I have again heartily embraced, but I cannot help inserting a few quotations on some of those points. Cicero says, in his *Tusc. Quest* "We can never believe, that after the virtuous have struggled through all their labours, an infinitely good and Almighty God will let them fall into an eternal sleep." In another place he says "If I am wrong in believing that the souls of men are immortal, I please myself in my mistake : nor while I live, will I ever chuse, that this opinion, wherewith I am so much delighted, should be wrested from me : but if, at death I am to be annihilated, as some minute philosophers imagine, I am not afraid lest those wise men when extinct too, should laugh at my error."

And in his charming treatise on old age, he says, "This is my firm persuasion, that since the human soul exerts itself with so great activity, since it has such a remembrance of the past, such a concern for the future, since it is enriched with



*Eternity's vast ocean lies before me ;*  
Give the mind sea-room ; keep it wide of  
That rock of souls *immortal* ; cut thy cord ;  
Weigh anchor ; spread thy sails ; call ev'ry  
Eye the Great *Pole-star* ; make the Land  
NIGHT T

I will proceed with my narrative in r

I am,

Dear friend

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## LETTER XVIII.

On argument alone my *faith* is built ;  
*Reason* pursu'd is *Faith* ; and, unpursu'd  
Where proof invites, 'tis Reason then,  
And such our *Proof*, that, or our *Faith*  
Or *Reason* lies, and heav'n design'd it

BB

duties of natural religion had some influence on my mind and conduct. I sometimes went to church, where I felt a spirit of devotion ; so that I found my heart engaged in the prayers, and felt some degree of thankfulness to God. I also felt the same spirit of devotion at times when not at church. Nor could I help admiring the character of Christ ; his precepts also appeared to me perfectly well calculated to promote both public and private happiness.

In this state of mind I went quietly and contentedly on for some years. As I had no relish for the ridiculous pursuits of those around me, my amusement was reading, or, now and then, scribbling.

I at last (as I have before informed you) began to read some extracts from books on divinity which I found in the Reviews. Those extracts gave me a more thoughtful turn, and left my mind open to conviction. The first entire work that I read in defence of revealed religion, was Archdeacon Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity.

By the time I had gone through this very able and convincing work once, I was effectually humbled, and obliged to cry out, God be merciful to me a dreadful sinner ! I was obliged to confess that the wisdom, power and love of God were displayed in the gospel.

But although I was convinced that the gospel was a revelation from God, yet I had great doubts as to the dispensations contained in the Old Testament : nor did I think the New Testament an inspired work : in short, I gave but little more

that the Christian religion was a revealed will of God. On the same evidence, I ought to believe the Old Testament discovered from God ; yet the various objections unbelievers have repeatedly made to dispensation, together with many texts of the Old Testament, were difficulties I could not overcome, until I had read part of Paley and also the third enlarged edition of the first and the second edition of the second of Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian religion. This very extraordinary learned and sensible work, gave me satisfaction on those heads : and it is worth mentioning, that this work was written before Collins, Morgan, &c. wrote their objections and misrepresentations, which makes them inexcusable. I have induced several of my friends to look into this masterly work, when

kind a pure system of morality, to assure us of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and future rewards and punishments ; and that by his perfect life, his sufferings and death, he had given us an excellent example. Further than this I could not believe, until I had again, and again, consulted the scriptures, various commentators, and the works of many other learned divines, from whom I received great assistance ; particularly from Jenkin, and also from Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, an exceedingly valuable work. In this study I have employed a very large portion of my time, and in it I have found a lasting source of pleasure and delight.

After all my investigation, although I assent to the truth of those doctrines, I do not pretend that I comprehend them. I only believe them, because I think they are taught in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament.

The following passage in Butler's Analogy of Religion, pleased me much. " Hence, (says the Doctor) namely, from analogical reasoning, Origen has with singular sagacity observed, that ' he who believes the scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as we find in the constitution of nature.' On the quotation the Doctor adds, " And in like way of reflection it may be added, that he who denies the scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by

both have the same Author and cause.

I have often, like other infidels, laughed at people's believing what they did not understand without considering that, were we to believe more than what we understand, even of the common operations of nature, we should scarcely believe any thing.

Jenkin, when treating of the doctrine of Trinity, vol. ii. p. 401, says, "The sum is, in the most perfect unity of the Divine Nature do subsist the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, between whom is a real distinction, which though not the same, yet is equivalent to distinction of persons among men. That is this unity and this distinction, we learn from the scriptures; but what kind of distinction is, or how far it is to be reconciled with our notion of persons amongst men, and after what manner consistent with the unity of the Godhead

es? And how *in him we live, move, and have being?*” Page 196, he observes, “The best philosophers have been able to give no account of motion can be communicated without an immediate impulse, or concourse of the divine power.” Page 147, “Through an immense void space, the sun’s rays find their regular and constant way, and in a few minutes pass from the sun to the earth; for which there is no cause assignable from the attractive power; which should never detain the rays of light in a perpetual circulation about the sun’s centre, than dart them forth, by so violent a motion, to the remotest distance. But God said, *Let there be light, and there was light. He prepared the light and the sun.* This is the best and the most philosophical account that has ever been given of the productions of light.” Again, “If all the fluid which the sun loses in a year, were brought into a solid form, it would not equal a grain of sand.”

Hilpin in his second sermon observes, “But it is mysterious, says the deist. Aye, surely; and so is every pile of grass you tread on. But the question is not whether a thing be mysterious—all things are mysterious—but whether the mystery be supported by evidence? The pile of grass appeals to all nature, for its being, the work of God: and the truth of Christ’s atonement, never mysterious, is supported by evidence equally strong.—It rests on all the evidence that nature can give it.”

This great doctrine is supported also by the analogy of God’s moral government, under which all act as a kind of redeemers, and mediators.

troduction than our own. It is an c  
ly implanted in our nature, Guilt alw  
support." It is said of Leibnitz,  
mentions the sacred books but with  
*are filled*, said he, *with a moral*  
*man*. He said also, we ought to  
works of God as wisely as Socrate  
of Heraclitus, by saying, *That whic*  
*pleases me ; I believe the rest woul*  
*less, if I understood it."*

---

Man to himse  
Is all a miracle, I cannot see  
The latent cause, yet such I know  
That gives the body motion, nor te  
By what strange impulse 'tis, the  
Performs the purposes of will. H  
Shall thou or I, who cannot span  
In this our narrow vessel, compre  
The being of a God.

VIL:

## LETTER XIX.

Tell if thou knowest, why Conscience acts  
 With tenfold force, when sickness, age, or pain  
 Stands tott'ring on the precipice of death ?  
 Or why such horror gnaws the guilty soul  
 Of dying sinners, while the good man sleeps  
 Peaceful and calm ; and with a smile expires ?

DR. GLYNN.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU ask whether still I am satisfied and pleased with those parts of the Memoirs of my Life, in which I have made so free with Mr Wesley and his people ? I answer in the negative. I am not pleased, or satisfied, on that head for the following reasons.

I now think that I have treated serious subjects in too light and trifling a manner ; and that some of my stories should have been omitted, for obvious reasons. The late Mr. Badcock says, " In Warburton's works (against the Methodists) there is too much levity for a Bishop, and too much illiterate abuse for a Christian." Even while I remained a freethinker, I sometimes thought that I had been too severe towards them : as a christian I see my faults in a still stronger light. A real religious person will be careful how he speaks of the faults and failings of others : nor will he treat religious subjects with levity.

Although I was an infidel when I wrote my Memoirs, yet I was very careful that, in what I wrote against the Methodists, nothing should



...only against enthusiasm, is by some of those unbeliefs to be pointed against revealed religion, by any means I have contributed to, or hardening any unbelievers, I am sorry on that account also.

In the latter end of the year 1790, when my *Memoirs* were first published, I had, to its extent, the pernicious influence of those opinions upon all ranks in society. I became better acquainted with the cause of infidelity in others. I was sorry to find it so, for I was then fully convinced that the degeneracy of mankind will always be, and better while under the influence of fanaticism, and even superstition, than otherwise. I have lost all regard to, or sense of, the rights of others, I had known by myself and others, the want of sufficient knowledge.

common thing); the reason I did not understand it was because I read it in a publication where it was garbled; I have since found it in its proper place and state, it is in the third volume of his *Emilius*, and from thence I will transcribe it.

‘ Avoid all those who, under pretence of explaining natural causes, plant the most destructive doctrines in the hearts of men; and whose apparent scepticism is an hundred times more dogmatical and affirmative, than the decisive tone of their adversaries. Under the haughty protest of being the only persons who are truly enlightened, honest, and sincere, they subject us imperiously to their magisterial decisions, and give us for the true principles of things, only unintelligible systems, which they have raised in their own imaginations. Add to this, that while they overturn, destroy, and trample under foot every thing that is respectable among mankind, they deprive the afflicted of the last consolation of their misery; and take from the rich and powerful the only check to the indulgence of their passions; and they eradicate from our hearts the remorse of guilt, and the hopes of virtue; absurdly boasting themselves at the time the friends and benefactors of mankind. The truth, say they, can never be hurtful: so far I am of their opinion, and this is to me a great proof that what they teach cannot be true.’

To the above, Rousseau adds, in a note, the following:

‘ The contending parties reciprocally attack each other with so many sophisms, that it would be a rash enterprise to undertake to ex-

people was plain :  
‘ I know not whether among individu  
‘ more easily met with than the other  
‘ know, that when we speak of a peop  
‘ suppose they would as much abuse a  
‘ without religion, as they do religion  
‘ losophy ; and this consideration see  
‘ make a great difference in the ques  
‘ has proved very acutely, that fanatic  
‘ pernicious than atheism ; and this  
‘ disputed : but he neglected to obs  
‘ nevertheless true, that fanaticism,  
‘ guinary and cruel, is a great and ar  
‘ sion, that it elevates the heart  
‘ makes him look down with conten  
‘ that it is a prodigious spring of a  
‘ quires only to be duly regulated in  
‘ duce the most sublime virtues ; w  
‘ contrary, irreligion and a philosop

‘ increase ; by detaching themselves from their  
‘ species, and reducing all their affections to a self-  
‘ ish egotism, as fatal to population as to virtue.  
‘ The indifference of a philosopher resembles the  
‘ tranquillity of a state, under a despotic govern-  
‘ ment ; it is the tranquillity of death, and more  
‘ destructive than war itself. Thus fanaticism,  
‘ though more fatal in its immediate effects, than  
‘ what is called the philosophic spirit of the age,  
‘ is much less so in its remoter consequences.

‘ Philosophy, on its own principles, cannot be  
‘ productive of any virtue, which does not flow  
‘ from religion, and religion is productive of many  
‘ virtues, to which philosophy is a stranger. As  
‘ to the practice it is another thing, and remains to  
‘ be examined. There is no man who practices in  
‘ every particular the duties of his religion, when  
‘ he has one, that is true : the greater part of  
‘ mankind have hardly any religion at all, and  
‘ practice nothing of what little they have ;  
‘ this also is very true : but after all, some  
‘ have religion, and practice it at least in part ;  
‘ and it is incontestible, that motives of religion  
‘ prevent them often from falling into vice, and  
‘ excite to virtuous and commendable actions,  
‘ which they had not performed but for such mo-  
‘ tives. Let a priest be guilty of a breach of  
‘ trust ; what does this prove but that a blockhead  
‘ had confided in him ? If Pascal himself had  
‘ done it, this would have proved Pascal an hypo-  
‘ crite ; but nothing more.—But a priest ! Well,  
‘ and what then ? Are those who make a traffic,  
‘ the truly religious ? The crimes of the clergy by  
‘ no means prove that religion is useless, but that  
‘ few persons are religious.

• Religion  
• fanaticism given a greater  
• manners. This alteration is  
• letters, for we do not find the  
• ture hath flourished, humani  
• times the more respected; t  
• Athenians, the Egyptians, th  
• ors, and the Chinese, are evide  
• the other hand, what deeds of  
• have been effected by the ge  
• restitutions and reparations  
• tice of confessions brought at  
• tholics? Among us how m  
• are effected, how many alm  
• fore approaching commu  
• Jews, avarice let go its ho  
• banished from among them  
• their jubilee. Not a begga  
• their streets, as there is n

‘ be very much at their ease, and would be freed  
‘ from the trouble of appeasing the former? It is,  
‘ therefore, false, that this doctrine is not hurtful;  
‘ and therefore it cannot be true.

‘ Your moral precepts, my philosophers, are  
‘ very fine; but pray let me know what sanction you  
‘ have for them. Forbear a moment to wander  
‘ from the point, and tell me plainly what you sub-  
‘ stitute in the place of the Poul-Serrho.’

Although Rousseau in this note allows Bayle’s assertions to be true, yet I think it is evident that in his reasoning on it he has refuted it: and it should be remarked, that this author was only acquainted with a few philosophical atheists who speculated in their closets. What would he have said had he lived to see those opinions taught to the vulgar, and some of those philosophers guilty of the most horrid crimes?

From the examples that we have seen in France we should use much caution, even in laudable attempts to eradicate fanatical or superstitious notions from the minds of the common people. Amongst Mr. Wesley’s people there are no doubt some very sensible men; that this should be the case with the bulk of them is not to be expected. It is obvious that neither themselves nor their creed could be corrected or reformed by the method I took; they were more likely to be induced

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## LETTER XX.

" By hope affected virtue keeps the  
" That leads to heaven, and gains t

" On his support the wretched still  
" Live on his words, and catch t  
" While sweet religion points the w  
" To peace beyond this mortal va

DEAR FRIEND,

HAD not my last been so long  
added a curious passage from th  
Parr's Spital Sermon, preached at  
upon Easter Tuesday, April 15, 18  
that Plutarch, Bacon, and other  
men have said. that

‘ the happiness and the conduct of mankind? Super-  
 ‘ stition, it is granted, has many direct sorrows,  
 ‘ but atheism, no direct joys. Superstition admit-  
 ‘ fear, mingled with hope ; but atheism, while it  
 ‘ excludes hope, affords a very imperfect  
 ‘ security against fear. Superstition is ne-  
 ‘ ver exposed to the dreary vacuity in the  
 ‘ soul, over which atheism is wont to brood in  
 ‘ solitude and silence ; but atheism is sometime  
 ‘ haunted by forebodings scarcely less confused  
 ‘ or less unquiet, than those by which superstition  
 ‘ is annoyed. Superstition stands aghast at the  
 ‘ punishments reserved for wicked men in another  
 ‘ state ; but atheism cannot disprove the *possibility*  
 ‘ of such a state to all men ; accompanied by con-  
 ‘ sciousness, and fraught with evils equally dread-  
 ‘ ful in degree and duration, with those punish-  
 ‘ ments. Superstition has often preserved me  
 ‘ from crimes ; but atheism tends to protect them  
 ‘ from weakness only. Superstition imposes fresh  
 ‘ restraints upon the sensual appetites, though it  
 ‘ may often let loose the malignant passions ; but  
 ‘ atheism takes away many restraints from those  
 ‘ appetites, without throwing equal checks upon  
 ‘ those passions, under many circumstances where  
 ‘ they may excite them in the minds of its votaries.  
 ‘ Superstition is eager from a vicious ex-  
 ‘ credulity ; but atheism is often obstructed by  
 ‘ an excess of incredulity, equally vicious. Super-  
 ‘ stition is sometimes docile from conscious  
 ‘ weakness ; but atheism is always haughty from  
 ‘ real or supposed strength. Superstition  
 ‘ and perverts only in consequence of error ;  
 ‘ atheism rejects, and for the most part, creates



• We may without the imputa-  
 ' ture to ask, whether the argum-  
 ' ism be such as usually produce  
 ' and to warrant an unlimited aff  
 ' the imputation of perverseness.  
 ' in haste to apply to the judgmer  
 ' ist, what Taylor eloquently s  
 ' that, like the magnetic needle,  
 ' trembling and uncertainty, ere it  
 ' its beloved point, wavered at  
 ' first it doubted, and then was a  
 ' *could* doubt no more." After re  
 ' of rest, atheism may have the  
 ' ing a man from the agitations c  
 ' and the torments of groundless  
 ' it not destroy at the same tim  
 ' which are very salutary in che  
 ' tic desires, and calming our  
 ' ments ; and may it not exting  
 ' too, which seem *necessary* to  
 ' of mankind in their progress to

Exhales fresh sweetness from the vernal shower ;  
 So still, so calm, so tranquilliz'd the breast,  
 When all the fiend-like passions are at rest :  
 When Grace and Nature's jarring discord cease,  
 And conscience whispers, all within is peace.

THOUGHTS ON HAPPINESS.

It is certainly possible even for a fanatic, or superstitious person to experience such a charming state of mind at times : but it is not possible that an atheist ever should.

In every addition of my Memoirs, is the following passage.

' I have been often asked if I did not believe, or rather know, that the Methodists were a vile set of hypocrites altogether ? My reply has been uniformly in the negative. I am certain that they are not in general so : the greater part of them indeed are very ignorant, (which is the case of enthusiasts of every religion ;) but I believe that a very considerable number of the Methodists are a sincere, honest, and friendly people. In justice to those of that description, I may not be amiss to observe, that many artfully, designing persons, having noticed their character, connection, &c. and knowing that a religious person is in general supposed to be honest and conscientious, have been induced to join their societies, and by assuming an appearance of extraordinary sanctity, have the better been enabled to cheat and defraud such as were not guarded against their hypocritical wiles.'

If at a time when I had shaken hands with Christianity and parted, I was obliged in consci-

have in some measure been aiding infidelity. And perhaps what I have also have tended to encourage some impenitent sinners, who are ever ready to catch at what might be said in a light, trifling fanaticism or superstition, to any religious worship or conduct that is becoming a customary custom of the world.

I also think that I should not have to render the whole of those people by so doing I have grieved many sincerely worshipping God, and, as the best way and manner it is possible to render him.

It must be acknowledged that the means of reclaiming and civilizing ignorant, hardened and notorious whom it were hard to say whether brute were most predominate ; yet have by them been induced ever and anon, sober inductions -

## LETTER XXI.

Th' insidious sland'ring thief is worse  
Than the poor rogue who steals your purse.

1 COTTON.

DEAR FRIEND,

I AM also sorry that in my Memoirs I inserted two letters, said to be written by Mr. Wesley. When I inserted them, I informed my readers that I copied them from a pamphlet, entitled "A Letter to the Rev. T. Coke. LL. D. and Mr. Moore, by an old Member (of Mr. Wesley's Society). I was induced to believe those letters to be genuine, partly by their bearing some resemblance to Mr. Wesley's stile and manner, but more so from the notice which was printed at the end of the second letter, and is as follows.

*Should any one entertain a doubt concerning the foregoing letters being written by Mr. Wesley, the author can produce the original, for the satisfaction of such, if they will take the trouble to call on the publisher, who has his address, and will refer them to him.*

When I transcribed these letters from the above pamphlet, the third edition of my Memoirs was in the press; and as the printer was nearly come to the part where I wished them to be introduced I sent the copy off in a hurry, and then set off to my house at Merton.

Some time after these extraordinary letters had been printed in my Memoirs, I was not quite satisfied that I had omitted to see the original

produce the originals, I was mortified with myself for having inserted the memoirs.

In all subsequent editions of the work I should have left them out ; but I found a place there, had they been thought my readers might be deceived, I thought that I had not done right in omitting others that never saw the pamphlet. I informed my readers I had transcribed, they might think they were fabricated by me. I had from conscious guilt left them in the whole, I thought it best not to omit that they are to be found in about two copies of the Memoirs of my life.

I have ever, in subsequent editions, informed my readers that I could not be certain of the authenticity, as I had sent to the author to request a sight of the originals, and he returned the above answer. I also informed them the pamphlet from whence I transcribed

posing Mr. Wesley to be the author of the  
 f these letters, he could not have been an  
 : man, or sincere in what he professed to  
 e, as I ever believed him to be until I saw  
 etter. Even while I was an infidel I respect-  
 a so much for these qualities, and his un-  
 d disinterested labours, in what he believed  
 he cause of God and the good of mankind.  
 always gave me pleasure to see him pass  
 shop. After I had seen those letters I was  
 in doubt as to his real character. When I  
 ed on his primitive manner of living, his  
 ngs, his unparalleled labours for more than  
 years together, &c. I could hardly think it  
 le for a human being to be for such a length  
 ie, and in such a manner, only acting a  
 d part; for had he been the author of the  
 etter, he must have been a hypocrite, or a  
 inker, or both.  
 ; a horrid crime to misrepresent and blacken  
 erson's character.

—“ The dark villain who shall aim  
 To blast a fair and spotless name, ...  
 He steals a precious gem away,  
 Steals what both Indies can't repay.”

was still worse to blacken such a person as  
 pious man must acknowledge Mr. Wesley  
 ve been. Notwithstanding (what I conceive  
 all his enthusiasm and wrong opinions, he  
 nly was a venerable character, who served  
 od and the King faithfully.  
 ng much dissatisfied with myself for insert-

fully convinced that his life was  
sistent with the opinion which  
his character ; and whoever will  
to look over that part of the work  
be convinced that those two let  
ascribed to him, were fabricated  
base purpose.

Tread on his ashes still, ye ruffian  
By venal lies defame the sacred do  
With Satan still your feeble mali  
The last poor efforts of a vanquis  
T' arraign a saint deceas'd profar  
But look to meet him at the last  
And horribly recant your hellish :

ELEGY ON

I will transcribe the account of  
ii. page 454. Tuesday, March 1  
forenoon he said, ' I will get u  
were preparing his clothes, he bre  
that astonished all who were

‘ Having got him into his chair, they observed no change for death. But he, regardless of his failing body, said with a weak voice, ‘ Lord, Thou givest strength to those who can speak, and those who cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues.’ He then sung,

“ To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;  
 “ Who sweetly all agree”—

‘ Here his voice failed. After gasping for breath, he said, ‘ Now we have done all.’ He then laid on the bed, from whence he rose no more. After resting a little, he called to those who were with him, ‘ To pray and praise.’ Soon after he said, ‘ Let me be buried in nothing but what woollen ; and let my corpse be carried in my coffin, into the chapel.’ And again called upon them to ‘ pray and praise ;’ and taking each by hand, and affectionately saluting them, bade them farewell. Attempting afterwards to say anything, which they could not understand, he rested a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, said, ‘ The best of all is, God with us.’ Again, lifting his hand, he repeated the same words in a holy triumph, ‘ The best of all is, God is with us.’ Something being given him to moisten his lips, he said, ‘ It will not do ; I must take the consequence. Never mind the poor carcase.’ Being told that his brother’s widow was come, he said, ‘ He giveth his servants strength ;’ thanked her as she pressed his hand ; and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. His lips



titions.

“ Most of the following night he offered to repeat the psalm before me; but could only get out, ‘ I’ll praise—’ I’ll : Wednesday morning his end drew near. Bradford, his old and faithful friend, the affection of a son, had attended him years, now prayed with him ; and the last he was heard to articulate was ‘ fareye

“ A few minutes before ten, on the 10th of March, while a number of his friends were kneeling round his bed, died Mr. J. without a groan. He was in the 67th year of his age ; had been sixty-five years in the ministry ; and the preceding pages will be a memorial of his uncommon zeal and usefulness in his Master’s work more than half a century. His death was

a certain part of his income, but all he had ; his own wants provided for, he devoted all the rest to the necessities of others. He entered upon this good work at an early period. We are told when he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two-and-thirty. The third he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds, still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two." In this ratio he proceeded during the rest of his life ; and in the course of fifty years, it has been supposed, he gave away between twenty and thirty thousand pounds.

I have said before, in my Memoirs, that he left behind him, at his death, 4*l.* 10*s.*

I am,  
Dear friend,  
Your's.

## LETTER XXII.

With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd :  
 Tho' harsh the precept, yet the preacher charm'd.  
 For letting down the golden chain from high,  
 He drew his audience upward to the sky.  
 He bore his great commission in his look :  
 Yet sweetly temper'd awe ; and soft'ned all he spoke,

And thus by rules severe his life he squar  
 That all might *see* the doctrine which th  
 For priests, he said, are patterns for the  
 (The gold of Heav'n bears the God imp  
 But when the precious coin is kept uncl  
 The Sovereign's image is no longer seen  
 If they be foul, on whom the people trus  
 Well may the baser brass contract a rust  
 Ever at hand was he without *request*,  
 To serve the sick ; to succour the distre  
 Tempting on foot alone, without affrigh  
 The dangers of a dark tempest'ous nigh  
 Such was the saint ; who shone with eve  
 Reflecting, Moses-like, his Maker's Fac  
 God saw his image lively was express'd :  
 And his new work, as in creation, bless'  
 DRYDEN'S GOO

DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE you will excuse me if  
 one letter more on Mr. Wesley, as I  
 such an extraordinary person must be  
 to every curious observer of human n

ained by his death. Upon a fair account it ears to be such, as not only annihilates all the roaches that have been cast upon him ; but h as does honour to mankind, at the same time it reproaches them. His natural and acquir- bilities, were both of the highest rank. His rehension was lively and distinct ; his learn- extensive. His judgment, though not infal- s, in most cases excellent. His mind was fast and resolved. His elocution was ready clear, graceful and easy, accurate and unaf- ed. As a writer, his style, though unstudied, flowing with natural ease, yet for accuracy perspicuity, was such as may vie with the best ers in the *English* language. Though his per was naturally warm, his manners were tle, simple and uniform. Never were such py talents better seconded by an unrelenting severance in those courses, which singular owments, and his zealous love to the interests nankind marked for him. His constitution excellent ; and never was a constitution less sed, less spared, or more excellently applied, n exact subservience to the faculties of his id. His labours and studies were wonderful. e latter were not confined to theology only, but ended to every subject that tended, either to improvement, or the rational entertainment he mind.

f we consider the reading he discovered by it- ; his writings, and his other labours by them- es, any one of them will appear sufficient to e kept a person of ordinary application, bu ng the whole of his life. In short, the tr

prising extent a man may render him-  
his generation, by temperance and  
His friends and followers have no r  
ashamed of the name of *Methodist* h  
ed upon them : as, for an uninterrupt  
years, he has given the world an inst  
possibility of living without wasting a  
and of the advantage of a regular dis  
time, in discharging the important  
purposes of life. Few ages have m  
such a public testimony of the valu  
and perhaps none have had a more c  
example of the perfection, to which th  
ment of it may be carried.

“ As a minister, his labours were u  
and such as nothing could have sup  
under, but the warmest zeal for the c  
taught, and for the eternal interests o  
He studied to be gentle, not violent ;

"To finish the portrait. Examine the tenor of his life, and it will be found self-evidently inconsistent with his being a slave to any one passion or pursuit, that can fix a blemish on his character. Of what use were the accumulation of wealth to him, who, through his whole course, never allowed himself to taste the repose of indolence, or even of the common indulgence in the use of the necessaries of life. Free from the partiality of any party, the sketcher of this excellent character, with a friendly tear, pays it as a just tribute to the memory of so great and good a man, who when alive was his friend."

Page 479, Dr. Whitehead says, "The following, so far as it goes, is an accurate and beautiful picture of this extraordinary man."

"Very lately, I had an opportunity, for some days together, of observing Mr. *Wesley* with attention. I endeavoured to consider him, not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher; and I must declare, every hour I spent in his company, afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind, beamed forth in his countenance. Every look shewed how fully he enjoyed 'The gay remembrance of a life well spent:' and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and shewed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at loss whether to

embittered his discourse : no aspect to past times, marked his present. In him, even old age appeared like an evening without a cloud ; as possible to observe him without wish ' may my latter end be like his !'

" I find myself unequal to the task of writing such a character. What I have said may appear as panegyric ; but the friends, and those of taste and discernment, who can bear witness to the truth, will bear witness to the perfectness of the sketch. With such I have been in company ; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would subscribe to all I have said. In my own part, I never was so happy as in his company, and scarcely ever felt more poignant than at parting with him - for well

his motives were imputed to the love of power, ambition, and lucre. It now appears he was actuated by a disinterested regard to the universal interest of mankind. He laboured, and preached, and wrote, to propagate, he believed to be the gospel of *Christ*. The means of those engagements were employed in forming and regulating the concerns of his numerous societies ; assisting the necessities, solving the difficulties, and soothing the afflictions of sufferers. He observed so rigid a temperance, allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed above the infirmities of nature, and to act independently of the earthly tenement he occu-

The recital of the occurrences of every day of his life would be the greatest encomium.

Had he loved wealth, he might have accumulated without bounds. Had he been fond of power, his influence would have been worth courtship to any party. I do not say he was without ambition ; he had *that* which *christianity* need not condemn, and which virtue is proud to confess. It does not mean that which is grafted on splendour and large possessions ; but that which commands hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude of thousands. For him they felt sentiments of veneration, only inferior to those they pay to heaven : to him they looked as their father, their benefactor, their guide to glory and immortality : in him they fell prostrate before God, with prayer and tears, to spare his doom, and prolong his

Such a recompence as this is sufficient to atone for the toils of the longest life. Short of *this*,



rit was neither damped by difficulty by age. This was ascribed by power of Divine grace ; by the *asm.* Be it what it will, it is what must envy, and infidels respect ; gives energy to the soul, and there can be no greatness or hero

“ Why should we condemn that which we applaud in every other pursuit ? He had a vigour and elasticity which nothing but the belief of God and presence could inspire. This round his infirmities, changed his into a triumphal car, and made his *cosis* rather than a dissolution.

“ He was qualified in every branch he was well versed in the learned *Metaphysics*, in Oratory, in Logic and every requisite of a *Christian* style was nervous, clear, and manly

; he dedicated all the powers of body and  
; at all times and in all places, in season and  
season, by gentleness, by terror, by argu-  
by persuasion, by reason, by interest, by  
motive and every inducement, he strove  
inwearied assiduity, to turn men from the  
of their ways, and awaken them to virtue and  
on. To the bed of sickness, or the couch of  
erity ; to the prison, the hospital, the house  
arning, or the house of feasting, wherever  
was a friend to serve, or a soul to save, he  
repaired ; to administer assistance or ad-  
eeproof or consolation. He thought no office  
miliating, no condescension too low, no un-  
ing too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of  
offspring. The souls of all men were e-  
precious in his sight, and the value of an  
tal creature beyond all estimation. He  
ated the abodes of wretchedness and igno-  
to rescue the profligate from perdition ;  
communicated the light of life to those who  
larkness and in the shadow of death. He  
ed the outcasts of society, into useful mem-  
and civilized even savages, and filled those  
th prayer and praise, that had been accus-  
only to oaths and imprecations. But as the  
est religious impressions are apt to become  
d without discipline and practice, he divided  
ople into classes and bands, according to  
ttainments. He appointed frequent meet-  
r prayer and conversation, where they gave  
ount of their experience, their hopes and  
their joys and troubles ; by which means  
ere united to each other, and to their com-

grace and virtue. Thus he governed and led his numerous societies, watching their ment with a paternal care, and encouraging them to be faithful to the end."

Page 484. "The figure of Mr. Wesley is remarkable. His stature was low; his body in every period of life, the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance, and constant exercise; and notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance, even a few years of his death, vigorous and youthful. His face, for an old man, was one of the most I have seen. A clear, smooth forehead, a straight line nose, an eye the brightest and most penetrating that can be conceived, and a fresh complexion scarcely ever to be found at his age, were indicative of the most perfect health, and to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck by his appearance: and many, who had been acquainted with him, have been known

had a strong character of acuteness and penetration.

“ In his dress, he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity. A narrow, plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic ; while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person.”

Perhaps I cannot conclude this letter better than with the following lines :

A dying Saint can true believers mourn ?  
 Joyful they see their Friend to heaven return  
 His animating words their souls inspire,  
 And bear them upwards on his car of Fire :  
 His looks when language fails, new life impart ;  
 Heaven in his looks and Jesus in his heart ;  
 He feels the Happiness that cannot fade,  
 With everlasting Joy upon his Head.  
 Starts from the flesh, and gains his native skies ;  
 Glory to God on high !—the Christian dies !  
 Dies from the world, and quits his earthly clod.  
 Dies, and receives the crown by Christ bestow'd,  
 Dies into all the life and plenitude of God.

WESLEY.

' Unto thee, my bleeding Lord,  
 ' However late, I turn :  
 ' Yes ; I yield, I yield at last,  
 ' Listen to thy speaking blood,  
 ' Me, with all my sins I cast  
 ' On my atoning God.'

DEAR FRIEND,

I.HAVE lately, on more than on  
 been obliged to subscribe to the tr  
 words of Christ. *If any man will do*  
*my Father, he shall know of the doctri*  
*teach whether it be of God.* I am mor  
 convinced, that if we do not *love dark*  
*than light*, this light *will shine more* a  
 our minds, and dispel the mists and  
 which we are by nature and sin env  
 that the perfect day will at last burst  
 and then it is that we und

dition of my fellow-creatures around me : the  
 owing lines have often been mournfully repeat-  
 ed by me :

- ‘ Ye simple souls that stray,
- ‘ Far from the path of peace,
- ‘ (That lonely, unfrequented way)
- ‘ To life and happiness.
- ‘ Why will ye folly love,
- ‘ And throng the downward road;
- ‘ And hate the wisdom from above,
- ‘ And mock the sons of God ?’

About twelve months since I sent for some  
 cheap religious books, viz. The Whole Duty of  
 Man, the Great Importance of a religious life,  
 the Minister’s Call to the Unconverted, Brown’s His-  
 tory and Doctrine of the New Testament, Gil-  
 bert’s Lives of Truman, Atkins and Baker, and  
 various others ; some of which I gave away,  
 and the rest I left at a poor man’s house to be by him  
 lent to such of the farmers, or poor people, as  
 would read them. And I had reason to think  
 that some little good was done, by thus giving  
 them an opportunity of reading without any ex-  
 pence.

To some young men whom I thought would  
 not read religious books, I lent Robinson Cru-  
 soe’s Adventures, and some other moral and en-  
 tertaining works, in order to employ them in the  
 winter evenings, and by this means prevent them  
 from spending their evenings in bad company.  
 For young women I got Susan Gray, The Work-  
 use, &c. I also got many of a cheap edition  
 of Addison’s Evidences of the Christian Religion,

ed course of me, —

cerns ; and I perceived that those repeated serious observations, made some little in the conduct of several.

Last summer, being in Taunton, at the house of Mr. J. Smith, brother to my first wife, I was brought in a parcel of those religious tracts which are published by the Religious Tract Society, and sold cheap by T. Williams, Stationer, Ludgate-street, London. I had heard that there was such a society established in London, but did not know where their tracts could be had ; so that I was very much pleased with an opportunity of procuring them. I took one of each of more than twenty sorts ; and when I got home, Mrs. L. and I went over together, in order to know what I should recommend abroad, and re-

land, yet I did not approve of that tract entitle  
 "The Good Old Way, or the Religion of our  
 Forefathers, as explained in the Articles, Liturgy  
 and Homilies of the Church of England, briefly  
 displaying Man's *Ruin* by Sin; his *Recovery* ef-  
 fected by Christ; and his Gratitude, expressed  
 by Obedience." Over the title of this I wrote  
 "methodistical," and would not send for one of  
 them; on several others I wrote, "rather metho-  
 distical," and of such I sent but for a few, among  
 those I intended for some of the most ignorant  
 and the most hardened: for I was not so much  
 prejudiced against the Methodists as to wish my  
 fellow-creatures to live in sin and ignorance rather  
 than become Methodists, but could have been  
 heartily glad to have seen the bulk of mankind  
 turn Methodists, rather than continue to live as  
 though they were not accountable creatures,—  
 though there was no future state, in which the  
 wicked will be punished, and the righteous re-  
 warded; or, in other words, where every man  
 shall receive according as his works have been,  
 whether good or bad. Still I was not thoroughly  
 sensible of man's utter inability to do any thing  
 himself towards his acceptance with God; that  
*salvation is by grace, and justification by faith in*  
*the blood of Christ; of having peace with God*  
*and an assurance of his pardoning mercy; and*  
*the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.* These  
 were subjects that did not much please me.  
 I did not at this time deny that a very few of the  
 highly favoured people of God might, possibly  
 be blessed with the knowledge of their being re-  
 conciled to God; but as to it being the common



my poor neighbours in the  
sense of their wicked way of life, I saw  
three thousand of them, and many  
have already given away to the farmers,  
soldiers, &c. The more I spent  
time and money in attempts to be serve  
the souls and bodies of my fellow crea-  
ture more I was disposed towards religious  
enabled to enter into the spirit of reli-  
gion which was in Christ  
degree of ardor. Mrs. L. also partakes  
the same disposition; so that no books  
us so well as those that treated of divi-  
We had, some time before this, given  
romances, and books of a trifling na-  
we even neglected history, voyages  
&c. not that we thought it wrong to  
but because we found more pleasure

I had inserted in my Memoirs the two letters that were ascribed to Mr. Wesley. He joined with me in wishing that I had not been so imposed upon. Not long after this he brought from Bristol Dr. Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, 2 vols. 8vo. I having expressed a wish to see in what state of mind Mr. Wesley died. After having satisfied myself on that head, I returned the set of books, as I had no intention to read any more of the work; but the account of his death. In Spring last, I wished again to see the account of his death, and I sent to the Temple of the Muses for the work; and after I had again read the account of his death, and his character, as drawn by several hands, and transcribed them, as in two former letters you have seen, I put by the set of books having no inclination to be made acquainted with his ministerial proceedings. But after having read such a number of tracts, as mentioned above and various volumes in divinity, and much in the bible, I again took up Dr. Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, and as I saw by the title page, that it contained an account of Mr. Wesley's ancestor and relations, the life of Mr. Charles Wesley (whom I had often heard preach,) and a history of Methodism, I requested Mrs. L. to help me in reading it through.

To describe the conflict, and the different commotions which passed in my mind while we were reading this excellent work, is impossible. We have been instructed, delighted, much confounded, and troubled. That divine power which has been felt by thousands and tens of thousands and

and washed them with my tears. —  
love, were sweetly mingled together  
I once more, after so many years, —  
of what these lines express :

- The godly grief, the pleasing smart
- The meltings of a broken heart ;
- The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
- The mystic joy of penitence.

- The guiltless shame, the sweet dis-
- Th' unutterable tenderness,
- The genuine, meek humility,
- The wonder, ' why such love to me

- The o'erwhelming power of savi-
- The sight that veils the seraph's fi
- The speechless awe that dares not
- And all the silent heaven of love.

I was now convinced that the pa-  
God, which forty years since was fi

And everlasting love :  
 To me with thy dear name are given  
 Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

Jesus, my all in all thou art,  
 My rest in toil, my ease in pain,  
 The med'cine of my broken heart ;  
 In war my peace, in loss my gain,  
 My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,  
 In shame my glory and my crown.

I am,  
 Dear friend,

Your's.

## LETTER XXIV.

Oh ye cold-hearted, frozen, formalists !  
 On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm ;  
*Passion* is reason, transport temper, *here*.  
 Shall heav'n, which gave us ardor, and has shewn  
 Her own for man so strongly, not disdain  
 What smooth emollients in the *ology*,  
 Recumbent virtue's downy doctors preach,  
 That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise ?  
 Rise odors sweet from *incense uninflam'd* ?  
 Devotion, when lukewarm, is undevout ;  
 But when it glows, its heat is struck to heav'n ;  
 To human hearts the golden harps are strung ;  
 High heav'n's orchestra chaunts *amen* to man.

Talk they of morals ! O, thou bleeding *love* !  
 The grand morality is love of thee.  
 Thou most indulgent, most tremendous pow'r !

Thou rather than thyself  
Hidst stain the cross; and work of woe  
The greatest! that thy dearest far might be

DEAR FRIEND,

DIVINE truths now rushed upon  
flood, and swept away all objections.

‘ Feel the *great truths*, which burst the ten;  
‘ Of *beathen* error, with a golden flood.  
‘ Of endless day: To *feel*, is to be fir’d;  
‘ And to *believe*, LORENZO, is to feel.”

I am at last constrained to acknow  
the mighty power of God has been  
from the beginning amongst the Met  
that the same Almighty arm is sti  
overturning the kingdom of darkn  
from darkness to lig

- All power is to our Jesus given ;
- O'er earth's rebellious sons he reigns ;
- He mildly rules the hosts of heaven,
- And holds the powers of hell in chains.

I now can scarcely think it possible for an un-  
 ejudiced person to read the Life of Mr. Wes-  
 ley, and not acknowledge that the path he took  
 and ever after continued in, was pointed out by  
 the finger of God. By going out into the streets,  
 highways and hedges, and calling sinners to re-  
 pentance, and preaching salvation by grace to a  
 lost world, what countless numbers have thrown  
 down the weapons of their rebellion, and enlisted  
 under the banner of the cross. Sinners of every  
 description have been compelled to come in. Old,  
 ring, hardened sinners have been made humble  
 and gentle as lambs. The wise, in the things of  
 this world, have given up their wisdom, and have  
 become teachable as little children. The self-  
 righteous have been brought trembling to the foot  
 of the cross, where they gladly accept of pardon  
 and salvation as the free, unmerited gift of God  
 through Christ ; and feelingly join in singing,

I the chief of sinners am ;  
 Yet Jesus died for me !

are astonished that no more of those good,  
 zealous ministers, (for many such there  
 both in the church of England and also  
 at the Dissenters,) who have a concern for  
 the welfare of mankind, and would gladly turn sin-  
 ners from the error of their ways, but yet from  
 year, and even for ten, twenty, thirty, or

they hear the swearer blaspheme as when they see the sabbath-day still profaned and adultery are still practised ; continues unholy still ; parents still bring children in forgetfulness of their Creator things of another world.

In short, when they die, they leave creatures over whom they were overs bad, or worse state than they found them.

How is it that such men do not reflect that something must be fatally wrong in matter or manner of their preaching ?

These gentlemen will occasionally censure the inefficacy of moral philosophy to rekindle. They will point out the deep into which the heathen world was in bondage came. They will clearly prove that it was taught by Socrates, Aristotle, Plato

—' The *great truths* which burst the tenfold night  
Of heathen error, with a golden flood  
Of endless day.'

'alk they of morals? Oh, thou bleeding love!  
'he grand morality is love of thee.      *youxe.*

It is said, that when Baxter first came to Kidminster, he found it overrun with ignorance and profaneness. He found but a single house or two, that used daily family prayer in a whole street; and, at his going away, but one family or two could be found, in some streets, that continued in the neglect of it. And on Lord's day, instead of the open profanation to which they had been so long accustomed, a person in passing through the town, in the intervals of public worship, might overhear hundreds of families engaged in singing psalms, reading the scriptures, or perusing good books, or such sermons as they had taken down on hearing them delivered from the pulpit. The number of his stated communicants rose to six hundred; of whom he himself declared, there were not twelve concerning whose sincere piety he had not reason to entertain good hopes. Blessed be God the religious spirit which was thus happily introduced, is yet to be traced in the town and neighbourhood, in some degree." The wonderful effects produced by the preaching, and other labours of the late Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley, are pretty well known. I wish every minister of the gospel would read his Portrait of St. Paul, as published by Mr. Gilpin. It is an excellent work. The various traits in St. Paul's character are drawn in a masterly manner; and



committed to the world.  
Such as will read that work, and Dr.  
head's Life of Mr. Wesley, must learn  
is still with such as faithfully dispense  
and boldly declare that there is no ot  
given under heaven whereby men can  
that other foundation can no man lay  
which is already laid, which is Jesus C  
was by thus preaching Christ, that three  
were converted by one sermon preached

Jesus, the name high over all  
In hell, or earth or sky  
Angels and men before it fall  
And devils fear and fly  
Jesus, the name to sinners dear,  
The name to sinners given!  
It scatters all their guilty fears  
To throne their hell to heaven.

ve ever after lived so as to adorn the gospel of  
rist in all things ; so that the world have taken  
nowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.  
ie life that they henceforth lived was by the  
th of the Son of God, who loved them, and  
ve himself for them, to redeem them from  
s present evil world, and hereafter from the  
ath of God, which is ready to be manifested  
ainst all ungodliness and unrighteousness of  
n.

‘ Jesus the prisoner’s fetters breaks,  
‘ And bruises Satan’s head ;  
‘ Power into strengthless souls it speaks,  
‘ And life into the dead.

‘ His only righteousness they shew,  
‘ His saying faith proclaim ;  
‘ ’Tis all their business here below,  
‘ To cry, Behold the lamb !’

Thus does God by the foolishness of preaching  
ve them that believe. By this “ foolish preach-  
;” as it is called by the world, the hearts and  
es of thousands and tens of thousands have  
en totally changed ; drunkards became sober ;  
alterers became chaste ; the covetous were  
ide liberal ; the extravagant, careful ; and the  
ost ignorant were made wise unto salvation, and  
le to give a rational account of the religion of  
rist ; the brutish were civilized ; the passion-  
: were made gentle ; the proud were made  
mble and meek ; the cruel and hard-hearted  
re made merciful and tender-hearted ; the un-  
st became just in all their dealings ; slanderers  
d backbiters were made partakers of that love

sign of all

ed for the King and all in audience,  
and their encouragers, learned to  
Cæsar the things that are Cæsars ; sa  
ers learned to spend that day in religi  
and pious exercises ; the idle beca  
ous. In short, like the apostles, the  
world upside down, knowledge arose  
rance, order out of confusion, light  
ness, happiness out of misery, heave

Who can reflect on these wonde  
without acknowledging that this  
work of God ? The powers of earth  
a thousand times been stirred up  
work in vain. The gates of hell h  
able to prevail against it. It has in  
creasing, and God grant that it ma  
minished, but increased a thousand

What says my old friend to all t

2 Machiavel

‘ Fly, sinners, fly into the arms  
‘ Of everlasting love.’

I am,  
Dear friend,  
Your’s.

---

## LETTER XXV.

- The weary and burthen’d, the reprobate race ;
- All wait to be pardon’d, thro’ Jesus’s grace.
- In Jesu’s compassion the sick find a cure :
- And gospel salvation is preach’d to the poor.’

DEAR FRIEND,

HAVING those serious views of sacred subjects, I was more than ever desirous that the poor ignorant, thoughtless people in my neighbourhood should be awakened and made sensible of their dreadful state ; but how to effect this I was at a loss : for in giving away the religious tracts, I found that some of the farmers and their children, and also three-fourths of the poor, could not read ; that some of the farmers hated the clergy on the score of tythes ; so that some of those that now and then went to church were not likely to receive benefit from those they hated. Others of them would neither go to church themselves, nor let their families go. Many of the poor also lived in the total neglect of all public worship ; and spent the sabbath, some in ale-houses, others at pitch-and-toss, fives, and other

in the manner mentioned above farmers in general observe the sabbath more than the poor ; their time is often shewing their cattle, sheep, hogs, &c. in letting jobs of work ; in viewing what has been done in the week, or in viewing what is to be done the week ensuing. They visit each other, and making merry, &c. The place where the market is held is called the market. Here, before the service, they talk over the prices of the goods sold for in the week past, and what they intend to sell for the next week.

I was also affected to see the children of the poor brought up in ignorance and immorality. Four years since, I and a few of my friends began a Sunday and day school, yet so many could not be prevailed upon to attend, and the few that do attend are corrupted by the wicked examples of the children of the poor, and other children of the poor. Very little good is to be expected of the children of the poor.

rs, and having laughed at and ridiculed them, may suppose that my feelings on this occasion were not very pleasant ; but I knew that they learned of their divine Master to return good for evil, and that they also went about doing good, made it the grand business of their lives to induce sinners to fly from the wrath to come ; so at last I went to Thornbury, and found out a gentleman who is a member of their small society, and desired that the next preacher that came there would do me the favour of calling on

On Saturday the 1st of October, 1803, Mr. [redacted], one of the preachers in the Dursley circuit, paid me a visit. To this excellent young man I communicated my concern for the stupid, unhappy wretches around me ; and although I had to preach three times the next day, at [redacted] in the morning and at half past five in the evening at Thornbury, and at Elberton, three or four miles from Thornbury, at two ; and although my health is so much impaired by preaching, that I was lately thought that he never would be able to reach more ; yet this kind-hearted young man cheerfully agreed to, and did preach on a Communion called Alveston Down, a quarter of a mile from my house, at eleven o'clock, to about sixty or seventy people, small and great. All were present and attentive. Mrs. L. conversed with some of them afterwards, who expressed thankfulness for having heard a sermon that they could understand, as they said that they could not understand the sermons at church, because there were so many fine words in them. Blessed be God that I have the gospel preached unto them, in a

I am very confident that not one of the country congregations are able to what they hear preached. What a pity the clergy, particularly such as live in the country, do not, in their compositions, use the fine, plain language of the common people. But to return from this digression.

That I should again hear a Methodist under a hedge was matter of surprise. It was much more surprising, the previous notice that there would be preaching on the evening of the Friday se'nnight. This affair has been, and is still, the subject of conversation for many miles around various parts of England and Wales. This extraordinary news nearly throughout the kingdom. Perhaps you will be a little surprised to inform you, that Mrs. L. on the evening went about three miles round part of the country, calling at every cottage in her way, to give them that a sermon would be preached.

leased to hear such an excellent discourse, and  
re so well adapted to the understandings of the  
earers. Mr. Ward, the preacher, is not quite  
three and twenty years of age, and if he conti-  
nues to preach as much as he has done for three  
years past, I fear that he will not live to be much  
older. But he is so zealous in his Master's cause,  
so intent on bringing poor lost sinners to Christ,  
that he cares but little about his body. He is  
now of Madeley, where Mr. Fletcher was vicar ;  
and although he was not converted under his  
teaching, yet he appears to partake much of the  
same spirit that actuated that extraordinary ser-  
vant of God. I also heard Mr. Ward that day at  
nine o'clock in the morning, and at half past five  
in the evening, in Mr. Wesley's chapel in Thorn-  
bury. All his sermons were excellent, and I  
found *it was good to be there*.

I believe we should have had a much larger con-  
gregation on the Down, had not about five hun-  
dred volunteers been at that time exercising about  
half a mile from where Mr. Ward preached.

To break the Sabbath seems to be a wrong way  
to conquer our enemies. Our churches are near-  
empty at those times ; as the people of all de-  
scriptions are drawn to the place of exercise.  
Here, cakes, gingerbread, &c. are hawked about  
for sale ; so that it appears more like a fair day,  
than the Lord's day.

I am,

Dear friend, Your's.



**NOTWITHSTANDING :**  
said against the Methodists in the 1  
life, an impartial observer may s  
my own account, that those people  
great benefit to me. The very g  
which took place in my life after I f  
penance, must have been remarked  
time, I was a thoughtless, careles  
from that hour I was totally chang  
anxious to learn to read, and it w  
fore I constantly read ten chapter  
every day. I also read and learr  
religious tracts. For about five  
very religious life, but through  
was overcome and carried away b  
spirit of a contested election. A  
a year in vice, by only once hearin  
preach. I was effectually preva  
nounced my sinful practices, and  
live in the fear of God. About t

the full assurance of hope.—Although during my wife's illness and death, I lay in a state that was thought to be past recovery, yet even in this situation I was so happy as even to astonish some who visited me.

The readers of my Life may also recollect, that the Methodists visited me and my wife during this great affliction : and, my business being at a stand, (in consequence of my having no one to attend to my customers), they lent me money to defray the expences incurred during my long illness, and locked up my shop, to prevent me from being plundered of all I had. I might also mention many other favours that I received from them, which made me say in my Life, that they were “ in general a friendly, honest-hearted, sincere people.”

I perhaps ought also to observe, that if I had never heard the Methodists preach, in all probability I should have been at this time a poor, ragged, dirty cobbler. peeping out from under a bulk with a snuffy nose and a long beard ; for it was by their preaching that I was taught to call upon God for his grace to enable me to turn from my vicious course of life, and through which I became a real christian. It was by their means also, that I was excited to improve a little my intellectual faculties. It was through them that I got an amiable helpmeet in my first wife ; and she likewise will have reason to all eternity to remember the Methodists with gratitude, for having been the instruments of her conversion ; for before she heard them preach, she had not even the form

been now an old granger, according to the generality of journeymen sh it is well known, that many, very of the same kind might be adduc bers by being connected with the to be industrious and frugal, by w have been enabled to live in c something for their children, themselves in their old age.

In my Memoirs, although I ha that there are many sensible peo Methodists, yet I have represent as very ignorant. The reason and represented them as such, the more any people are influen the more do they live *as stran upon the earth* the more they h *recompence of reward, the more that is invisible.* The more the life of God in the soul, the pre dence in the providence of God

in their generation are wiser than the children of light.

That many ignorant people have from the beginning to the present time, joined the Method-

has never been denied. *I thank thee, O Father,* saith Christ, *that thou hast hid those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* You see, saith St. Paul, *your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men (philosophers) after the flesh; not many mighty, not many rich, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world.* The preaching of the doctrine of the cross for the reformation and salvation of mankind; was from the beginning thought to be foolishness to the philosophers and moral reformers. *Where is the wise?* or the philosophers that read lectures of morality? *Where is the scribe?* he that all his life has studied the Mosaic law? *Where is the disputer of this world?* *Searcher into the secrets of nature?* Hath not God shewn that all their wisdom is foolishness and ineffectual in the important work of reforming mankind? May it not be with truth asserted, that the late John Nelson\*, the Methodist preacher, by preaching Christ crucified, reformed more hardened sinners, than were ever reformed by all moral lectures that were ever read to mankind? In St. Paul's days the wise were confounded in seeing the wonderful effects that were produced by the preaching of a few plain men, whom they termed fools, because they wanted the learning of the age. Mr. Wesley says,

\* See John Nelson's Journal.

That Mr. Wesley's people are ignorant people, I am fully convinced that the reverse is the fact. I will begin with the preacher. He must admit that Mr. Wesley was an educated man. His brother Charles had considerable abilities, and was likewise a man. Some of their preached men; others of them have talents; and if we take the whole together, they will be found in the theory as well as practice, as revealed in the New Testament, although there is reason to believe that the effects produced by their preaching, assisted by the Spirit of God, is such that it is their duty to read and obey. Mr. Wesley strongly enforced this upon them, when he met them in the field, as appears by the minutes of the

mon on *Heb. v. 4.* *And no man taketh this to himself, but he that is called of God, as aron.* In those tracts he has clearly proved that the Jews, the primitive church, the church of England, and other churches, allowed those to preach that were not priests, nor in holy

to return. As to the members in general of the Methodist Society, I never saw any better educated in religious matters. They are better acquainted with the bible, and with the nature and design of christianity, than any people. I

The comparison is particularly striking in the poorer sort. In those parts of the country where Methodism has long been established, you will find that the poorest Methodist is able to give you a rational and scriptural account of the effects of the grace of God on the soul. He is well acquainted with the nature of the commandments and promises contained in the word of God, and knows what he has to hope and fear. As it is Addison who observes, that religion has a very great tendency to enlarge the intellectual faculties of man : as the Methodists do not waste their time in idleness and diversions, they have more time to read than others ; they also attend many sermons preached by men of various talents amongst themselves ; and many of them attend the service at church ; they also assemble, converse with, and improve one another. At the difference in degree of knowledge between the poor Methodists and the poor in general is very remarkable. Mr. Addison justly says, that "The most illiterate man who is

will naturally contract such a  
attention towards a better Being  
ordinary passages of life go on  
indifference. By this a man  
tion will not appear mean."—]   
their knowledge of the things  
*be foolishness*, and the greatest  
to be only whims. Spiritual  
discerned by one that is spirit

' The things unknown to f  
Unseen by reason's glim  
With strong commanding  
Their heavenly origin di

' Faith lends his realizing  
The clouds disperse, the  
Th' Invisible appears in si  
And God is seen by mor

I a

## LETTER XXVII.

' Ah, Lord, with trembling I confess,  
A gracious soul may fall from grace !  
The salt may lose its seasoning power,  
And never, never find it more.

' Lest that my fearful case should be,  
Each moment knit my soul to thee :  
And lead me to the mount above,  
Thro' the low vale of humble love.'

DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I look into my Memoirs, I shudder  
see what I have done. I have wantonly treated  
and sported with the most solemn and pre-  
cious truths of the gospel. O God, lay not this  
to my charge ! Other infidels have obscured,  
much as they were able, the external evi-  
dences of Christianity ; but I made a thrust at  
vital part. There are many thousands who  
never had time or opportunity, or who have been,  
in one way or other, prevented from investigating  
external evidences of the Christian religion,  
and yet are as much assured of its divine autho-  
rity as they are of their own existence. They  
know that *Christ is come in the flesh ; that they are  
children of God ; that they are passed from death unto  
life ; that they were once blind, that now they see ;  
that old things are done away, and all things are  
become new ; that they were once miserable, but  
are now happy ; that they were once without God in  
this world, but now by that faith which is the opera-  
tion of God, the substance of things hoped for,*



*have a building, not made with ha  
heavens.*

It was this internal evidence  
martyrs triumph in the midst of  
this evidence, neither the prete  
the open enemies of christianity  
to destroy. Christianity, witho  
without a soul. And all those  
invalidate this internal evidence  
*ing nothing ; are false spies that  
port of the good land ; they are  
terness and bonds of iniquity, and  
nor lot in the matter ; and, soon  
will be found to be fighters agains*

Jezu, vouchsafe a pitying ray,  
Be thou my guide, be thou my  
To glorious happiness !  
Ah ! write the pardon on my l  
And whensoever I hence depa  
Let me depart in peace.

tian is one that has been called out of darkness into marvellous light ; so, as long as his eye gle, his soul is full of light, and he walks in light, as God is in the light, and in him is no darkness at all ; yet, if he turn back again into Egypt, he will again be involved in Egyptian darkness. The sun of righteousness will never shine upon him. Adam, as soon as he obeyed his God, at once lost his favour and blessing, and sunk into a state of darkness and ignorance, and attempted to hide himself from the all-seeing eye among the trees. And when his renewed soul falls again to a course of sin, he is again smitten with blindness, and he gropes but cannot find the door. The candle of the Lord does not shine upon his head. They are blind, and cannot see afar off ; and have forgot that they were redeemed from their sins. They will curse, and swear, though they know not the man. As they did not like to part with the knowledge of God, he gives them over to blindness and hardness of heart. They have quenched the Spirit, and done despite unto it. They no longer know the things which belong to their peace, they being hid from their eyes. They have ears that see not, and ears that hear not. This evidence I have attempted to invalidate. O God, be merciful to me a sinner !

Jesus, let thy pitying eye  
 Call back a wandering sheep ;  
 False to thee, like Peter, I  
 Would fain like Peter weep.

Let me be by grace restor'd ;  
 On me be all long-suffering shewn,

have driven people out of their  
commit suicide, &c. But I say  
*I never knew an instance of the*  
*personal knowledge.* I have seen  
pamphlets wrote against them,  
papers, and I have been told that  
happened; and upon such kind  
have shamefully followed other  
stories after them.

In finding fault with the Me  
for endeavouring to awaken all sinners  
converted, every one may see  
them I also blamed the prophet  
apostles, and also the church and  
most other reformed churches.  
preachers often tell their hearers  
our church, in her 9th article, *I*  
*far gone from original righteousness*  
*nature inclined to evil so that the flesh*  
*contrary to the Spirit; and therefore*  
*born into sin.*

*hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life*  
That which displeases the infidels and pretended christians on this head is, the Methodists insist on the necessity of *feeling* what we repeat, lest we be found solemn mockers of God.

In the scripture this conviction is called, being pricked to the heart, under which sinners are constrained to inquire, *What shall we do to be saved* To cry, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, &c. And under this conviction David roared *for the disquietude of his soul, and watered his bed with his tears* Jeremiah saith, *Be not a terror to me*. In another place, God says, *I will make thee a terror thyself*. Solomon says, *The spirit of a man may sustain his (bodily) infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear*. This is what is intended by *a contrite spirit, a broken heart*, &c.

So that what I have pointed out as a dreadful state is, I presume, quite scriptural; and must be more or less, felt by every person before he will see the necessity of coming to Christ for pardon and *salvation*; before *he can be born again, & converted*; or before he can be justified, as St Paul says, and as our church says also, before he *ever can be changed by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit*; before *he can perfectly love God, or worthily magnify his holy name*.

But as an infidel I cared for none of these things, and so ridiculed them all. The remembrance of which has in *reality* been to me grievous, and the burthen intolerable! May Almighty God make all the inventors, and other wanton narrators of such stories, feel, before it is too late, the same sorrow and sincere repentance!

Whither shall my vileness run?  
Hide me, earth, the sinner hide  
Let me sink into the dust,  
Full of holy shame adore!  
Jesus Christ, the good, the just,  
Bids me go and sin no more.

O, confirm the gracious word,  
Jesus, Son of God and Man!  
Let me never grieve thee, Lord,  
Never turn to sin again!  
Till my all in all thou art!  
Till thou bring thy nature in,  
Keep this feeble, trembling heart,  
Save me, save me, Lord, from sin

I am,

Dear fi

## LETTER XXVIII.

'Let us join ('tis God commands,)  
 Let us join our hearts and hands;  
 Help to gain our calling's hope,  
 Build we each the other up.'

DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE represented some of the Methodists as troublesome obtruders on the sick and dying; so that I think I ought to set this matter in a clear light.

Mr. Wesley's people think that they cannot *love their neighbour as themselves*, without endeavouring to find out every possible way by which they may be serviceable to the souls and bodies of their fellow creatures. In London and Bristol, and I believe in other places, some of their society who are able to pray, instruct, and exhort, endeavour to find out poor distressed objects who are confined to their beds by diseases in poor-houses, prisons, lodging houses, dirty lanes, alleys, &c. Those poor forsaken outcasts of society they instruct, exhort, pray with, &c. To objects most in want they give money. Perhaps there cannot be any labour of love more praiseworthy, or more deserving of encouragement, as great numbers of such poor destitute wretches may at all times be found languishing in a forlorn state, and generally die without any one caring any thing about them: for none but such as are filled with the love of God and man will ever go into such loathsome places

me, is too much to be performed  
thoroughly impressed with the  
mortal soul ; who are persuaded  
*of death for every man*, and who  
*should come to the knowledge*  
*saved*. While they were employed  
work, if they could discover  
that gave them reason to hope  
O, what love and joy warmed  
devil knew that *Job did not see*  
Christ still pays his servants what  
they do in his name and for his  
ple, when employed in such work  
to flesh and blood is not only in-  
ing, yet would not have exchanged  
which they found in it for any else  
To return to the subject.

It is not only in cities and large  
poor die unvisited ; but also in  
towns, villages. &c. In the north

d. When any one of them has any concern at his immortal part, he is afraid to give trouble to the vicar or curate, and ashamed to let them see his poverty and rags. Christ well knew the deplorable state of such poor creatures, and graciously promised to reward all such as exchange their dreary abodes. But as an infidel, I ought all talk about heaven and hell, praying them, &c. useless and terrifying; for which reason I exclaimed against such as performed these kind offices. And I recollect that when, but twenty years since, I was thought to be near death, I was so hardened as not to suffer any physician to come near me, or any other religious son.

Weary of wandering from my God,  
And now made willing to return,  
I hear, and bow me to the rod;  
For thee, not without hope, I mourn;  
I have an advocate above,  
A friend before the throne of love.

O, Jesus, full of truth and grace,  
More full of grace than I of sin;  
Yet once again I seek thy face,  
Open thy arms and take me in;  
And freely my backslidings heal,  
And love the faithless sinner still.

That an avowed unbeliever should refuse to accept any spiritual advice, and not suffer any prayer to be put up for him when about to quit the world, is not very surprising. But I am persuaded that there have been, and still are, very many



very people were such as put off  
sick or death-bed, not considering  
they continue in sin the more  
made, and that the consciences  
last *scared* as it were *with a hot ir*

‘ Dead already, dead within,  
Spiritually dead in sin ;  
Dead to God while here they b  
Panting after second death,  
They will still in sin remain,  
Greedy of eternal pain.’

You no doubt recollect that I l  
ed the private meetings establish  
ley among his people. Nor is it  
that a freethinker should hate  
grace, particularly such as have  
dency to keep the children of G  
to promote all inward and outw  
will transcribe Mr. Wesley’s acco

der the inspection of those in whom I could confide. This was the origin of classes in London, for which I can never sufficiently praise God, the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest." The person appointed to watch these little classes was called the *leader* of that class to which he received his appointment. Mr. *Wesley* called the *leaders* together, and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those he saw weekly. They did so; and many disorderly walkers were detected. Some were turned from the evil of their ways, and some put out of the society. And the rest saw it with fear, and rejoiced in God with reverence. At first the *leaders* visited each person at their own house; but this was soon found inexpedient. It required more time than the leaders had to spare. Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relations where they could not be visited. And where misunderstandings had arisen between persons in the same class, it was more convenient to see them face to face. On these, and some other considerations, it was agreed, that each leader should meet his class altogether, once a week, at a time and place most convenient for the whole. He begun and ended the meeting with singing and prayer; and spent about an hour conversing with these persons, one by one. By this means, a more full inquiry was made into the behaviour of every person; advice or reproof was given as needed; misunderstandings were removed, and brotherly love promoted. "It can scarce be c

They began to *love* one another, *naturally to care for each other's well*, had daily a more intimate acquaintance, they had a more endeared affection. Mr. *Wesley* further adds, "I could not but observe, this is the way from the very beginning of the earliest times, those whom I *to preach the gospel to every creature* of *hearers* were mostly Jews or soon as any of these were so truth as to forsake sin, and seek salvation, they immediately joined, took an account of their names, watch over each other, and *men*, as they were then called congregation, that they might exhort, and pray with them according to their several necessities."

Perhaps the following hymn  
in these meetings will be

Still for more on thee we call,  
Thou who fillest all in all !

Closer knit to thee our head;  
Nourish us, O Christ, and feed ;  
Let us daily growth receive,  
More and more in Jesus live.  
Jesus, we thy members are,  
Cherish us with kindest care ;  
Of thy flesh and of thy bone,  
Love, for ever love thy own.

Move and actuate, and guide,  
Divers gifts to each divide ;  
Plac'd according to thy will,  
Let us all our work fulfil,  
Never from our office move,  
Needful to each other prove ;  
Use the grace on each bestow'd,  
Temper'd by the art of God.

Sweetly may we all agree,  
Touch'd with softest sympathy;  
Kindly for each other care,  
Every member feel its share.  
Wounded by the grief of one,  
Now let all the members groan ;  
Honour'd if one member is,  
All partake the common bliss.

Many are we now and one,  
We who Jesus have put on :  
There is neither bond or free,  
Male nor female, Lord, in thee !  
Love, like death, has all destroy'd,  
Render'd all distinction void !  
Names and sects and parties fall !  
Thou, O Christ, art all in all !

I am, dear friend,  
Your's















AY 31 1951



